WHITE DWARF

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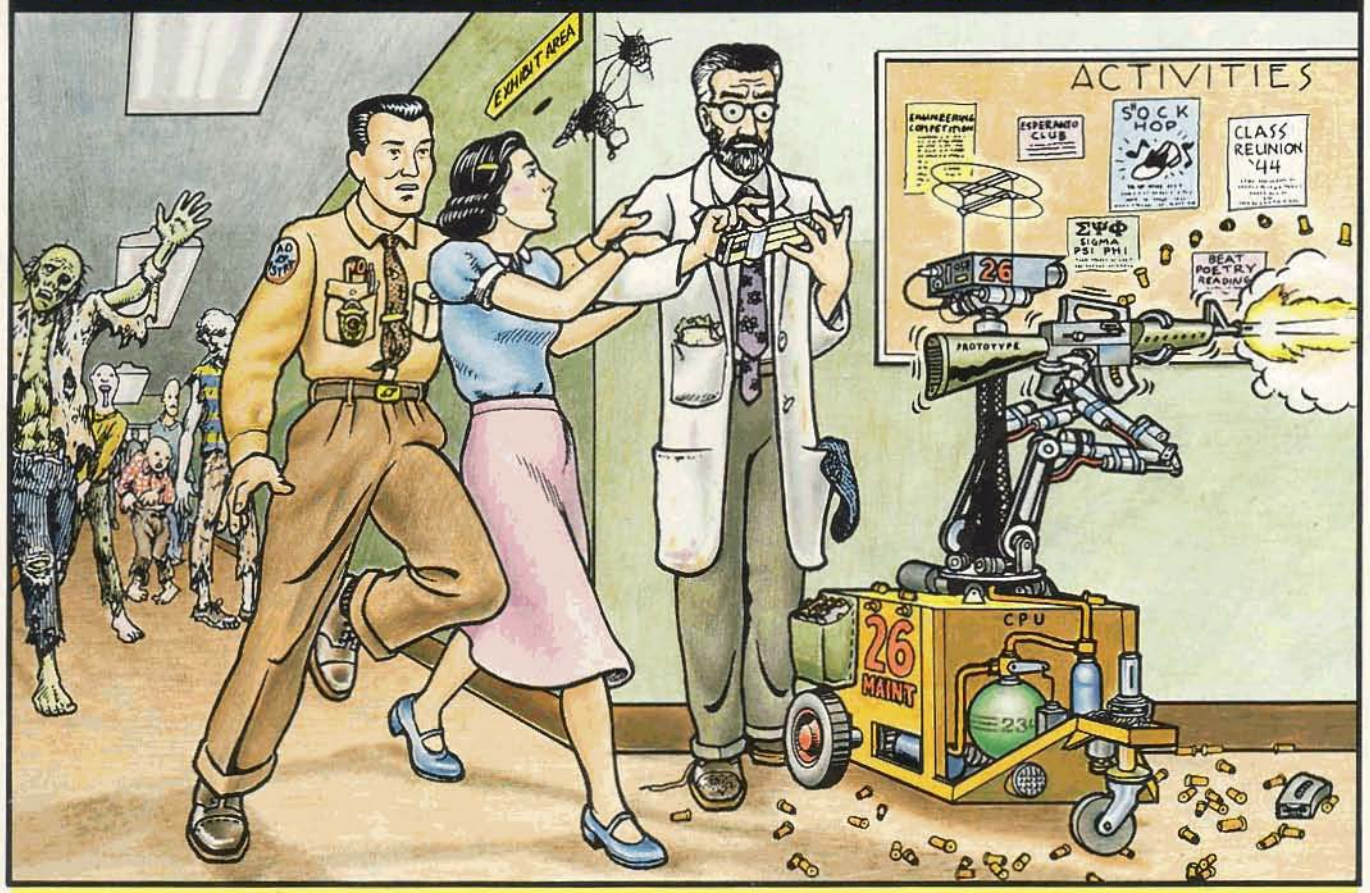

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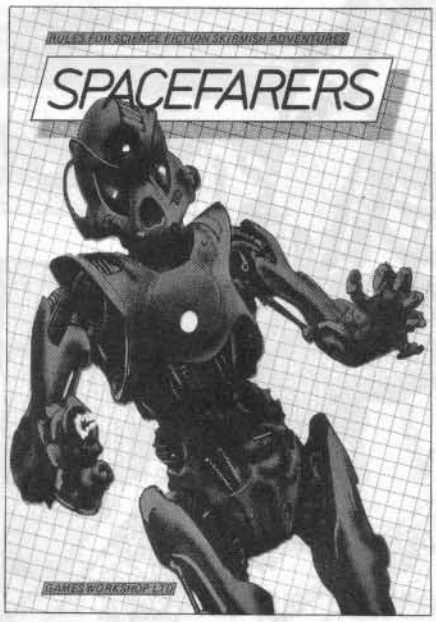

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Issue No. 25

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DEPARTMENTAL EDITORS: Albie Fiore, Andy Slack, Bob McWilliams
PRODUCTION ARTISTS: John Bradley, Mary Common, Liz Lindars
PASTE-UP ARTIST: Richard Swingler
COVER: Emmanuel
ILLUSTRATION: Emmanuel
PHOTOGRAPHY: Liz Lindars
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The publication of this issue means that *White Dwarf* moves into its fifth year and we hope that there are many more to come. This does, of course, depend on *you*, the reader. On page 27 will be found another questionnaire for us to discover readers' likes and gripes. Sending in replies is an effort, we appreciate that, but the more people who respond, the more accurate the assessment will be. If readers wish to save on postage, both replies to the questionnaire and answers to the Creature Quiz can be sent in the same envelope. Contributions to Fiend Factory, Starbase, Treasure Chest could also be included if you really get carried away!

We look forward to your replies and in the meantime thank you for your continued support of *White Dwarf*, the British voice for science fiction and fantasy gaming.

Ian Livingstone

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An Introduction to Dungeons & Dragons

Part III: The Spell-Using Classes

by Lewis Pulsipher

The Magic-User

Fifteen large hellhounds approach down a long corridor. What can the adventurers do to avoid crippling damage? "Step aside," says Orion the Mage. From his finger a spark flashes, becoming a deafening, raging bolt of energy as it streaks down the corridor. When their eyes readjust, the adventurers see five dead hellhounds and ten more running away. "'Twas nothing," says Orion, modestly . . .

Every *D&D* veteran remembers the first time he used a lightning bolt, and how satisfying it felt. The magic-user class is the overwhelming favourite of experienced players, partly because magic is the unique aspect of fantasy games, but also because magic-users are the most powerful characters at high levels. One of the flaws of the game is that magic-users become capable of mass destruction at relatively low levels. Moreover, unless the Dungeon Master works to restrict certain spells, by strict rule interpretation or by rule changes, they get out of hand.

A magic-user's strength is in his spells; everything else is weakness. About one quarter of a party will be magic-users; many of them elves. Magic-users should be protected by armoured characters, but able to see beyond the front or back line of the party. Since they represent the party's last line of defence, they should be closely protected; each spell they must use for their own survival is one less for the party to call upon at need. A party with only one magic-user is asking for trouble, since a single *charm* or *magic missile* can incapacitate him.

Most magic-users pick a dagger as their first weapon, but a few like darts; throwing either weapon can be surprisingly effective.

TACTICS

A magic-user can play many roles, some of which are:

Commando: This role calls for high hit points, or magical protection such as *Bracers of Defence,* and some kind of *invisibility.* The ideal is a fighter/magic-user. The character uses spells to penetrate enemy defences, then strikes from the rear, a favourite target being the strongest enemy magic-user. Careful planning is required, or poor co-ordination may leave him stranded. Common infiltration spells are *fly, invisibility* and *dimension door.*

Radar: *Detect magic* and *detect invisible* are often used. The latter is vital when magic-using enemies are expected. *Wizard eye* is good for scouting complexes or dark chambers.

Information gatherer: A *charmed* person can reveal a lot. *ESP* and *clairvoyance/clairaudience* are used to 'case' a place for a future attack. *Read language* and *identify* can only be taken if you have spells to burn.

Decoy: *Dancing lights* or *phantasmal force* combined with *audible glamer* or *ventriloquism* can play a big part in evasion or attack. The illusionist subclass is better suited to this.

Defence: A *web* is good defence in a dungeon, and so it's the most commonly used second level spell. *Stinking cloud* also stops pursuit. Both spells can be used offensively as well. *Hold portal, wizard lock, protection from evil, invisibility, haste,* and *dispel magic* are all commonly used.

Anti-individual: *Charm, hold person* and *suggestion* are often used against powerful individual opponents. To petrify a small group, a magic-user can use a *phantasmal force* of a medusa head.

Provider of cannon fodder: *Charmed* persons can sometimes be persuaded to open chests or fight for the party. More fun are *charmed* monsters, if you can speak with them. Learn trollish, for a regenerating *charmed* monster is worth any two others. Before an adventure a magic-user can *polymorph* an insect into a troll, then *charm* it. What a bodyguard! And it impresses the yokels.

Artillery: Most players prefer to use magic-users as heavy artillery. When tough monsters appear, *lightning bolt, fireball, fear,* and *confusion* are unlimbered. Although *charming* a dragon is elegant, blowing it up is more exciting. Nonetheless, a magic-user who relies on brute force will meet a bad end. There are many possibilities for the victory of brain over brawn — don't waste them. In your spare time, read through the spells to think of new uses and combinations. For example, *ventriloquism* can be used to convince ignorant creatures that a skull is a god. Some spells are ends; others are means.

Most magic-users try for a *homunculus* when they reach seventh level, depending on their hit points and the availability of the necessary spells. Most ignore the *find familiar* spell, because the average familiar's powers aren't worth the loss of hit points when it dies.

Much of this applies to illusionists as well as the standard magic-user. This subclass lacks the heavy artillery, though; spells tend toward deception and uncertainty. The illusionist player must be more cerebral.

The Cleric

A bedraggled, sorrowful band of adventurers carries a body to a temple at dawn. "O enlightened high priest," pleads the paladin, "Ammendil the ranger gave his life to defend us, killing four ogres before he fell. Is there no way to restore him to our ranks, to be an example to all by his deeds and dedication to our cause?"

The priest ponders; then intones: "In the name of our patron saint Georgias, I beseech thee, O Lord, to restore life to our lost comrade-in-arms. Let him once again smite thine enemies, for thy Name's sake."

And the dead man awakens!

Raising the dead is the most unusual move in gaming. It is the definitive attainment of any good cleric, and its opposite, *slay living,* is the aim of any evil one. Since most clerics are good, this advice is addressed to them; just remember that evil clerics are in every way opposed to what the good clerics stand for, though tactics are occasionally similar.

In *D&D,* clerics are religiously inclined warrior-spellcasters. They are not such a popular class as magic-users or fighters, but this stems partly from misconception of their role. A cleric who merely casts spells while watching events is wasting his potential, for many of the best warriors in *D&D* are clerics. Their spells are comparatively unspectacular and weak. A cleric might hang back when first level for lack of hit points, but thereafter he should smite in his god's name whenever a good chance appears. The cleric has no outstanding strength, but no weaknesses; in many ways, this is the most interesting character class.

Roughly 20% of a party will be clerics; they take positions near the front or rear of a party, where they are well-placed to drive away undead or cast spells as well as fill a hole in the front line during a fight.

There are three good choices for a cleric's first two weapons: mace, hammer and flail. A mace does more damage, but requires twice as much room as a hammer; a flail is useful only outdoors or in large rooms.

THE CLERIC'S ROLES IN A PARTY

Despite what I've said above, the cleric must think of spells first and fighting second. On the other hand, the stereotype healing cleric wastes the character. Options are:

Healer: *Cure light wounds* is the most common first level spell. *Cure serious wounds, raise dead, neutralise poison,* and others all serve the cleric-as-medic.

Radar: *Detect magic* and especially *detect evil* can be useful. *Know alignment* can be useful in town, dealing with artisans and merchants — just don't let them know you're using it. *Commune* is a marvellous source of information which many players fail to use.

Defence: *Speak with animals* is excellent outdoors, since it often prevents meaningless fighting. *Protection* shouldn't be forgotten, especially when demons and devils are around. *Continual light* should be cast on objects well before an adventure, since it lasts until dispelled.

Offence: *Silence* is great against spellcasters or when you want to sneak about. *Light* and *darkness* are also useful. *Hold person* is better than the magic-user's *charm. Bless* should be used against opponents of good armour class. *Command* can be used in some situations. — usually 'surrender' is the word.

Many players avoid cleric characters because they prefer neutral or non-religious types. The good cleric must concern himself with the conversion of unbelievers, kindness to the innocent, and devotion to his gods. In some campaigns he will not want to hurt a fly, but more often he is a church militant willing to smite evil whenever necessary. Even so, he must not turn a blind eye to unnecessary violence. He is the strongest proponent of teamwork in a party.

Subclasses

Monks are closer to fighters than clerics, and will be dealt with next issue. Druids are really a separate class, with strong, specialised outdoor magic. They should use the *animal friendship* spell and *speak with animals* to gain scouts and bodyguards — even a trained dog is a match for most first level characters. Space precludes dealing with them in any detail though.

Next issue, in Part IV, I shall examine the other two main character classes: Fighters and Thieves. ■

Creature Quiz

Here is a quiz based on SF and fantasy games. Some research will be necessary, but the first 3 correct entries drawn out of the hat (or the 3 with most correct answers) will be given a free year's subscription to *White Dwarf*. Entries should be sent to Creature Quiz, *White Dwarf*, 1 Dalling Rd., London W6 to arrive no later than 1st July 1981.

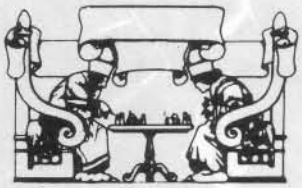
1. *Fill in the missing words to complete the titles of the following games:*

(a) WARP . . . . . .
(b) SHOOTING. . . . . .
(c) . . . . . REVENGE
(d) STELLAR . . . . . .
(e) VALKENBURG . . . . . .
(f) . . . . . NEBULA
(g) . . . . . CAVE
(h) ATTACK OF THE . . . . . .
(i) ICE . . . . . .
(j) CAVERNS . . . . . .

2. *In which boardgames do the following characters appear?*

(a) CALICO JACK . . . . . .
(b) VEROKIN . . . . . .
(c) ADAM THE WHITE . . . . . .
(d) REVEREND MOTHER RAMALLO . . . . . .
(e) DYVIM TVAR . . . . . .
(f) POLEPHEMUS . . . . . .
(g) SIGMUND . . . . . .
(h) MS. JONES . . . . . .
(i) OGSBOGG . . . . . .
(j) MACRON . . . . . .

3. *Identify the game companies associated with the following logos (where the name features as part of the logo, it has been omitted):*



(a) . . . . . .

(b) . . . . . .(c) . . . . . .

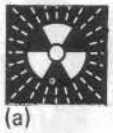
(d) . . . . . .(e) . . . . . .

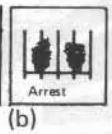
(f) . . . . . .(g) . . . . . .

(h) . . . . . .(i) . . . . . .

(j) . . . . . .(k) . . . . . .

4. *Identify the games from which the following counters are taken:*


(a)



(b)

(c)

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(e)

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(g)

(h)

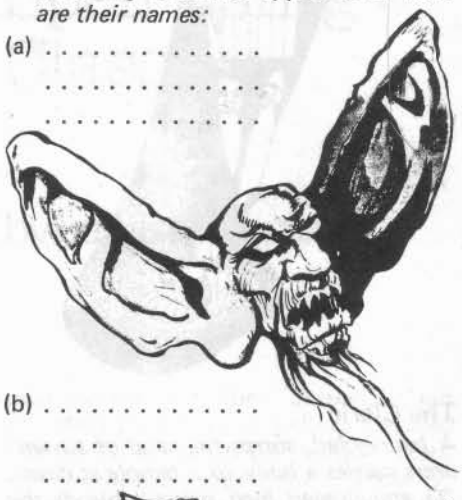
(i)

(j)

(a) . . . . . .
(b) . . . . . .
(c) . . . . . .
(d) . . . . . .
(e) . . . . . .
(f) . . . . . .
(g) . . . . . .
(h) . . . . . .
(i) . . . . . .
(j) . . . . . .

5. *In which role-playing games do the following creatures appear and what are their names:*

(a) . . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .



(b) . . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

(c) . . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

(d) . . . . . .
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(e) . . . . . .
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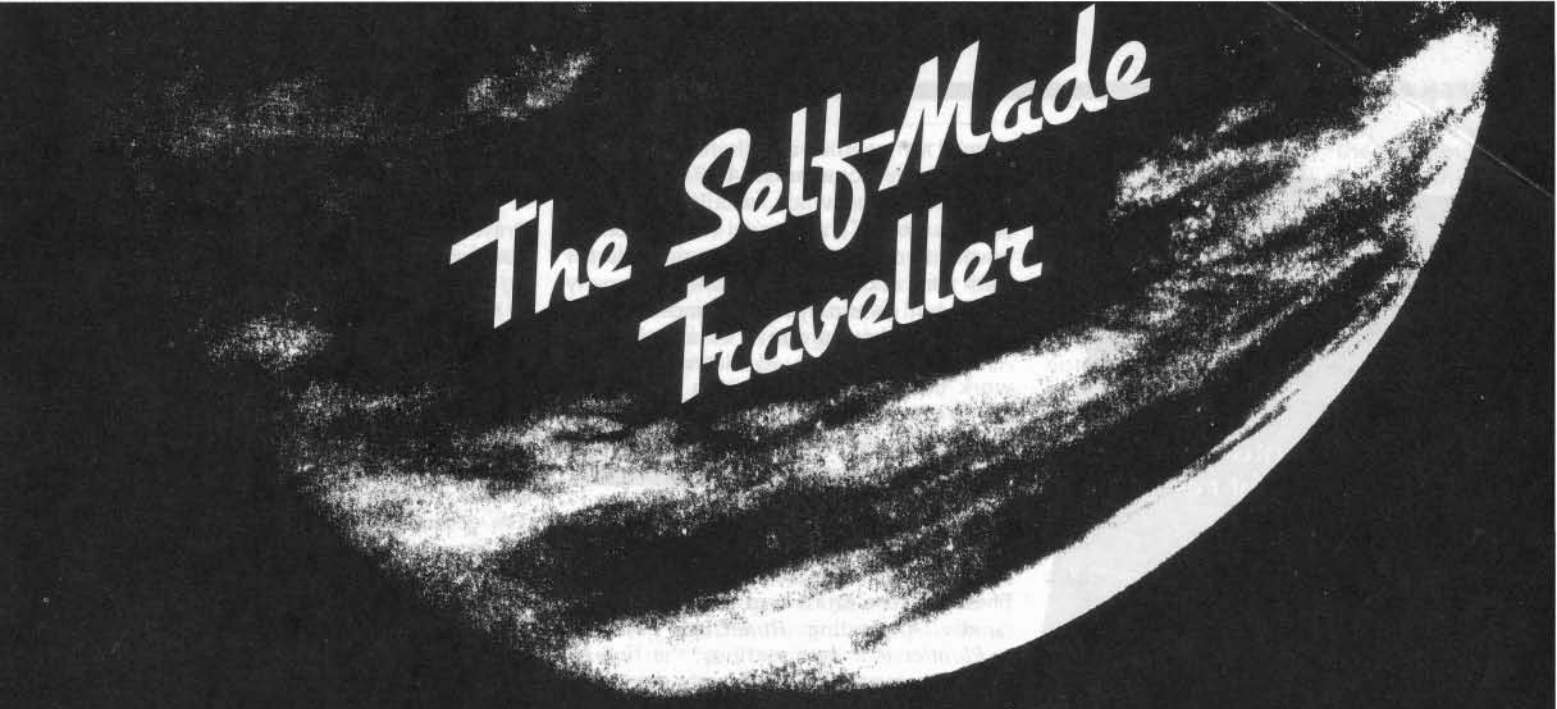


Optional Skill Acquisition for Travellers

by Trevor Graver

In this article, I propose a system whereby players may choose skills, rather than acquiring them by random die rolls. The system revolves around the idea of skill points; these are earned as the character progresses through his or her service career.

Skill points are earned according to the character generation system in use. Table 1 is used for basic *Traveller, Supplement 4,* and other careers using the Book 1 system; Table 2 is used for expanded character generation systems such as *Mercenary, High Guard, Criminals (White Dwarf 19), Star Patrol (White Dwarf 20), Merchants & Merchandise,* etc. In these expanded systems, there are certain limits on the first skills acquired; these are as stated in the appropriate system, eg the first skill acquired by a *Mercenary* character must be a Gun Combat skill.

Table 1. Basic Characters

Per four-year term	15 skill points
For a commission	10 skill points
Per promotion	15 skill points

Table 2. Expanded Characters

Basic training	20 skill points
Per promotion (E ranks)	3 skill points
Per promotion (O ranks)	10 skill points
Per successful Skill roll	10 skill points
Per one-year assignment	3 skill points

Characters are run through their service careers normally, except that skills are not determined. Add up the skill points acquired by the character from the tables above; when enough skill points are accumulated, a skill can be purchased from Table 3, Skill Groups and Costs; alternatively a characteristic can be increased, see Table 4. Note that a character may only choose a skill if it is one which he could acquire in the normal way, ie it must be available in his career to someone of his education. Skills and characteristic increases are purchased at the end of each four-year term, and any residual skill points after this purchase are dropped, the character starting over from scratch in accumulating them.

Table 3. Skill Groups and Costs

Type A Skills (Cost 10 skill points per level)		
Air/Raft	FA Gunner	Steward
Air Craft	Forward Observer	Vehicle
ATV	Gunnery	Water Craft
Carousing	Interrogation	Hunting
Combat Eng	Lockpick	Vacc Suit Maint
Commo	Recon	Security
Demolition	Survival	Low Berth Maint
Type B Skills (Cost 10 skill points per level up to level 3, 15 per level thereafter)		
Admin	Mechanical	Zero G Cbt
Battle Dress	Medical	Jump Drive
Disguise	Prospecting	Legal
Electronics	Recruiting	Navigation
Engnrng	Ships Boat	Weapon Skills
Gravitics	Ship Tactics	Trade & Speculation
Leader	Vacc Suit	
Type C Skills (Cost 10 points to level 1, 15 per level thereafter)		
Computer	Pilot	Bribery
Forgery	Unarmed Cbt	Gambling
Instruction	Streetwise	
Type D Skills (Cost 15 skill points to level 1, 20 per level thereafter)		
Jack-of-Trades	Liaison	Life Support

Table 4. Characteristic Increases

(Figures in the table are skill points required to raise the characteristic shown by +1 if the desired value is in the range shown.)

	Desired Value			
Characteristic	*1–4*	*5–8*	*9–A*	*B+*
Strength	12	10	12	15
Dexterity	11	10	13	16
Endurance	12	10	15	15
Intelligence	13	10	13	20
Education	10	10	12	15
Social Standing	10	12	15	20

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS

Special assignments are listed below, together with the number of skill points gained by attendance. Skill points thus gained may only be spent on skills available at the appropriate school; if a character knows at least half the available skills, and has at least one at a skill level of 3+, he may acquire Instruction skill.

Mercenary

Cross Training	10 skill points
Specialist School	10 (15 if Intel and Educ both 9+)
Commando School	2d6 x 4 skill points
Protected Forces	2d6 x 3
Recruiting	Automatic Recruiting–1; 50% chance of Admin–1
OCS	30
Intelligence School	2d6 x 3
Command College	2d6 x 2
Staff College	2d6 x 2
Attache/Aide	None (but see description)

High Guard

(Unless otherwise stated, results are as in *Mercenary* table above)

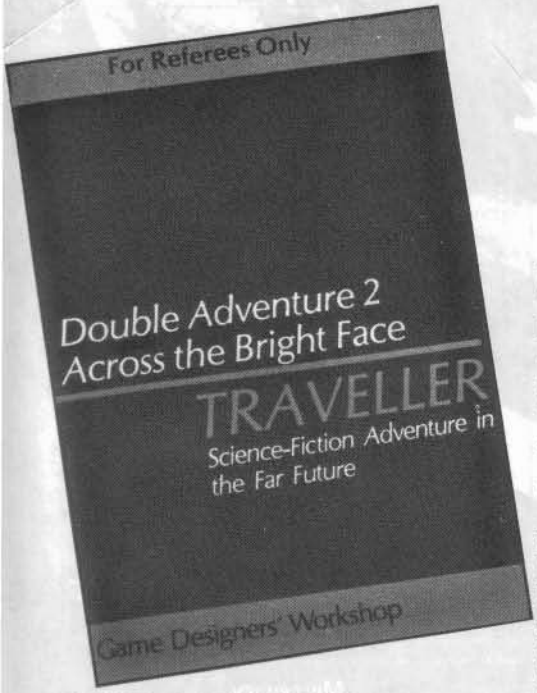
Gunnery School	2d6 x 3
Engnrng School	2d6 x 3
Command College	2d6 x 3
Staff College	2d6 x 3

Merchants & Merchandise

Physical Development	2d6 x 3
Cross Training	See description
Specialist School	2d6 x 2
Ship Security	2d6 x 4
Survival School	Survival–1 plus 2d6 x 3
Merch Serv Academy	10 plus points for promotion
Trade Expansion	2d6 (x 4 with interest)
Intelligence School	2d6 x 3
Command College	2d6 x 3
Staff College	2d6 x 3
Div Tech School	2d6 x 2
Merch Serv Liaison	Liaison–1 plus 10 points

Star Patrol

Recruiting	See description
Cross-Training	See description
Covert Survey School	2d6 x 5
Colony School	2d6 x 3
Synergy School	Jack-of-Trades–1
Contact School	2d6 x 3



DOUBLE ADVENTURE 2: MISSION ON MITHRIL/ ACROSS THE BRIGHT FACE

Games Designers' Workshop – £2.50

This is the second *Traveller* double adventure, containing two short adventures for a band of player-characters.

Across the Bright Face is situated on Dinom, a small planet whose polar axis extends through its parent star. Because of this anomaly, one side of the planet is in perpetual light, the other permanently dark. The adventure starts when the band, acting as bodyguards to a powerful business mogul, are caught up in a workers' revolution. Referee information is extensive and complete, including a geodesic map of Dinom for his use and one for that of the players – two-dimensional representations of the sphere rather like a d20 that has been opened and flattened. Maps show terrain, monorails, cities and the starport. 26 terrain events are presented in encounter table form, as well as pre-generated NPC and character statistics.

Mission on Mithril begins on an under-developed iceworld, one of the metal worlds in the Sword Worlds subsector of the *Spinward Marches.* A scout ship on detached duty arrives at Mithril days late due to drive problems, and has to ask assistance from the port warden. While he repairs the ship, the crew must investigate phenomena discovered in a recent orbital survey to repay the favour.

Referee's information is again complete, and includes a detailed geodesic map of Mithril, together with 28 individual terrain events; I am sure that these and the events in *Across the Bright Face* alone will generate scenario ideas for any *Traveller* ref, and they also show how a world can be developed in detail without resorting to a universe of stereotyped planets. Other data include a map of a type E starport, and two unique animal encounter tables, as well as weather details for 5 months.

Now the comments: *ATBF* is a great little scenario which should keep the players alert. To my mind it is the better of the two, fast paced and enjoyable for both ref and players. *MOM* is equally good, but gives players a lot more time to think and therefore may be a little slow.

Frankly I'm amazed that such a great work could be crammed into 42 pages. I advise everyone to at least look at it.

Overall: 10 **Trevor Graver**

PLUNDER & RUNEMASTERS

Chaosium – £3.95 each

These are the latest two play aids in the rapidly expanding *RuneQuest* system.

Plunder is in two sections; the first of these is over 20 pages of pre-rolled treasures. There are 10 tables that give the amount of money and number of gems, jewellery and special items in a hoard depending on the treasure factors of the monster defending it, followed by a table of gems/jewellery values and another of special item descriptions.

I doubt the worth of this initial section; true, when you are in a hurry to determine the amount of treasure that a wandering monster has it can prove useful, and I have myself used it for such a purpose. However a well organised GM could save a lot of money by spending half an hour or so before a game rolling a few treasures for encounters of different factors. Also, as such a list is unlikely to be exhausted in only one game it would take even less time to replenish it before it is used again.

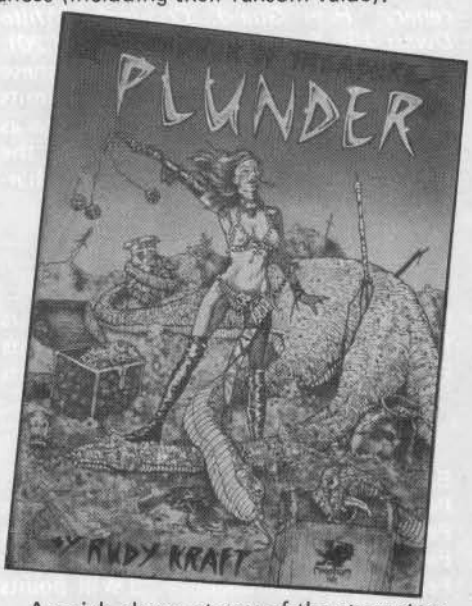
The second half of the book is rather more interesting, though again I feel not really worth the cost, unless a GM is desperate for ideas. The section consists of just over 40 magic items. Most of these are specific to Glorantha, the world on which *RuneQuest,* and other games of the *Dragon Pass* series, are based, however most are easily altered to fit the mythos of other GM's worlds.

Each item is described in the same way, each has a description, a list of its relationship to various cults, a few words saying how well known the item is, its history, its powers and finally an idea of how valuable it is if sold, this last section often gives more than one value depending on who it is sold to.

The range of items is very wide indeed. They range, in power, from something like Rhino Fat which when spread over the body (ugh) gives one extra point of armour protection for five hours, to some really powerful ones like Barjora's Shield which gives the wielder +20% shield parry, and the protection of four shield spells when in melee, amongst others. Some of the items are obviously magic items from other sources converted into *RuneQuest* terms, an example of this is Styx water which is little more than a potent form of Holy Water, though with rather different origins. Many others though are highly imaginative and original, and in some cases could lead to some very interesting scenarios in themselves.

All points considered *Plunder* is an interesting but by no means essential *RuneQuest* play aid, certainly not worth buying if you have a limited budget.

RuneMasters is a similar book to *Foes* and the other sets of prerolled *RuneQuest* monsters put out by the *Chaosium.* In this case the book presents 45 Rune level characters, a RuneLord, RunePriest and RuneLord-Priest of each of the 15 cults presented in *Cults of Prax.* Each RuneMaster is presented as an entire character. The description of each starts with his or her name, race, sex, what previous experience they have, their age and social class. Following this are their characteristics, which in many cases have been trained up to their maximum, and their hit points and defence bonuses. Then come the weapon skills, five or six of these to each character, many with percentages for both right and left handed use given. This section also indicates whether a weapon is made of a Runic metal, such as copper, iron or lead. There is then a section detailing each character's bound spirits, their INT, POW and what they are bound to, and what spells the character and spirits have. In the skills section which follows this, the percentage ability of the character is given in all skills from both *RuneQuest* and *Cults of Prax* and even includes the subtraction to their Move Quietly percentage due to their armour. Finally there are several short sections detailing their equipment, magical items and finances (including their ransom value).



A quick glance at any of the characters in the book will show that they are all very powerful. They all have high characteristics, even the Chalana Arroy healers have fairly good weapon skills, the average amount of power that each character can draw on, including that stored in crystals or in bound spirits is in the region of 100 and the majority of skills are at 75% or more. The immediate reaction of many GMs may be that they are too strong, but as the author has pointed out it is easier to make them weaker than stronger.

RuneMasters contains more than a number of powerful NPCs however. It also contains a large section on how to create and run a RuneMaster and his or her retinue. Using this section a GM can produce characters like those presented in the book and run them in an effective manner. Indeed players with RuneMaster characters would do well to look at these sections to get more out of their characters. There is also a section on group melee tactics, which amongst other things includes some useful hints on using magic to maximum effect, that would also be useful reading for both players and GMs.

Finally the book also includes yet another character sheet, and a spirit sheet, both meant for RuneMaster characters but equally usable for less powerful ones, repeats of the leaders and followers, squad sheets and a couple of worksheet to help organise melees.

In all *RuneMasters* contains a lot of useful material and would be well worth the cost to any GM as long as they use the *Cults of Prax*. Obviously drawing, as it does, such a lot of material from this book its usefulness is greatly reduced otherwise.

As I have said before, I rather dislike giving ratings for books or games but if you feel it necessary.

Plunder:5

RuneMasters: 9 **Oliver Macdonald**

SPACE OPERA

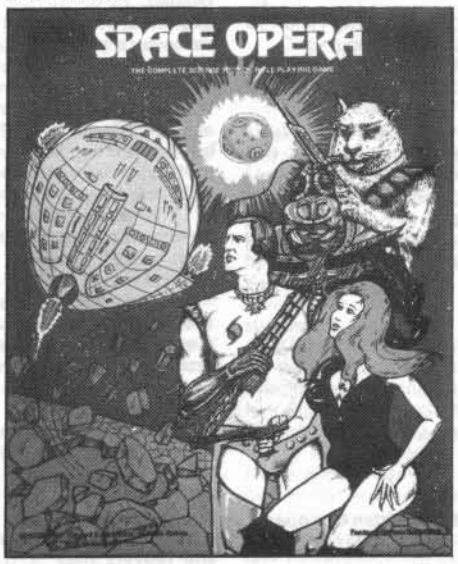
Fantasy Games Unlimited – £9.75

Space Opera is not a dramatic game; it is a melodramatic game. It is a science fiction role-playing game, based not on the extrapolated-known-science foundation of *Traveller,* but on the westerns-with-ray-guns school of SF: Kimball Kinnison and Han Solo would feel at home.

It draws on several earlier games; those springing most readily to mind are the FGU tactical miniatures rules, *Space Marines,* and the little-known (but excellent) SF role-player from Tyr, *SpaceQuest.* Ed Simbalist's usual thoroughness and attention to detail is in evidence throughout this mechanically complex game; *Space Opera* is to *Traveller* as *C&S* is to *D&D.* It is billed as the most complete SF role-playing game ever published; this is probably correct, but I came away from examining the rulebooks with the idea that what I had in my hand was a character generation system with a list of equipment and combat rules.

There are two books presented in a box (bearing the worst cover art I have ever seen) together with several useful sheets of quick-reference data and blank character, ship and world records, which may be photocopied. A nice touch on the world sheets is the inclusion of blank geodesic map; in this, the sphere of the world is idealised as an icosahedron, which is then splayed out on the page. The advantage is that an accurate hex map can thus be formed, which does not distort too heavily near the poles.

The first book is mostly concerned with dicing up characters, a mechanically complex procedure involving no fewer than 14 characterisitics. A character class is then chosen; this influences how many 'grudge points' you get for increasing your characteristics, and also which characteristics determine your initial skill points. The classes are Armsman (the Ultimate Ripping Machine), Astronaut (the Cat-Footed Spacer), Scientist (one of several kinds, ranging from Dr McCoy through Commander Scott to Hari Seldon) or Tech. The way these fit together seems to be that the Research Scientist figures out how it works; the Engineer builds it; the Tech keeps it running; the Astronaut drives it; the Armsman prevents rude strangers from interrupting the rest of them; and the Medic picks up the pieces afterwards.



Race may then be chosen, provided your personal characteristics enable you to qualify. Home planet conditions may be diced; if your home is particularly nasty you gain improved characteristics or survival-related skills.

The character now enlists in one of a large variety of services, gaining skills and money thereby – but not randomly; he adds together certain of his characteristics (which ones depends on class) and five points for each year served; he may then 'purchase' whichever skills he desires. The only restiction on purchase which is class-dependent is that weaponry skills cost double for non-military personnel. Most of the skills – there are almost 200 available – have prerequisites; for example, to learn Astrogation one must already know a certain amount of Mathematics and Astronomy, but to learn Astronomy one must already know Physics . . . and so on. Multiple characters are recommended for each player, so that a broad enough range of skills is achieved.

A comprehensive system of psionic powers – including both the Fore and Lenses – is appended after the section on skills; while rare, they are extremely powerful. A minor criticism is the apparent impossibility of getting the maximum stated score in one's psi requisite; this is awkward since it is mandatory for the use of some powers.

The second book deals with equipment, combat, starships, and worlds. The equipment comes in a bewildering variety of shapes, sizes costs and functions; I've not yet played a great deal of the game, but have not found an item I want which is not described.

The combat system, along with the historical background, is similar to that of *Space Marines;* rolls are required to hit and to penetrate armour, whereupon damage is determined. NPCs – but not players – may be killed outright; player characters enjoy many advantages in combat, which is just as well considering the time taken to create one, and need fear only the inevitable toe-to-toe confrontation with the Evil Villains.

Starships come in a variety of sizes; all are presented in a standard format telling you size, cost, and performance limits; you then build in optional extras to take you up to those limits, balancing speed, armour and armament. A consistent pseudo-scientific background is provided for the technology, doing away with such troublesome considerations as Relativity and Newtonian Mechanics. Starship battles are slow-moving until one understands the system, very bloody and impossible to get killed in if you're a player. You get through minions at a horrific rate, though.

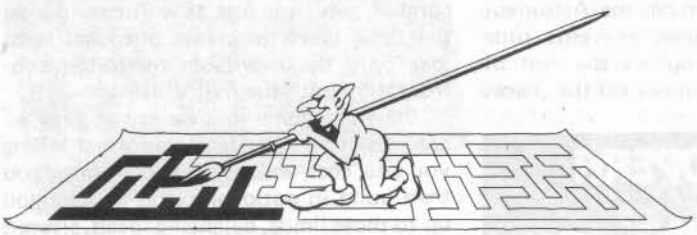
The world creation system is the best I've ever seen in print; reminiscent of that in *SpaceQuest,* but simpler. Star type is determined, yielding a percentage chance of planets present; I disagree with the possibility of planets orbiting the hot primaries which retain high angular momentum – classes O–F – but this is a minor criticism. If a planet is present, a percentile dice roll determines its nature. As befits space opera, all these planets are inhabitanle. A system for determining the culture and government is provided, which yields some thought-provoking cultures. Tech level is tied to government type.

I was disappointed in the paucity of detail on encounters and adventures. Animals are passably covered, but I couldn't find anything telling me how to set up an adventure or what kind of persons players should meet. This is surprising in view of the thoroughness with which everything else is treated. I imagine future supplements will alleviate this problem.

In conclusion: this is an extremely complicated game which will take a very long time to set up properly. It is also unusual for such a detailed game to be 'heroic' rather than 'realistic'. Nonetheless, for someone prepared to spend the time required to do it justice, this could be a rewarding and entertaining game. Even if you don't wish to use it as a full campaign itself, it has ideas and rules which will be a useful addition to any SF role-playing system.

Overall: 8 **Andy Slack**

THE DUNGEON ARCHITECT Part I THE INTERESTING DUNGEON



Have you ever wondered how to design a boring dungeon? It's easy. First, take some graph paper and a ruler, and rule out a grid of intersecting corridors, dividing up the spaces left in between into rooms. Put in some doors (at least one per room), number the rooms, and start rolling dice. According to die rolls, put either monsters or treasure or both in some of the rooms. Continue doing this until you have decided the contents of each room, and then hang out a sign saying "open for business".

What happens when adventurers go down a dungeon of this sort usually goes something like this:

"We go down steps."

"You see 50' corridor; door on right, then door on left, then door on right."

"Go up to first door, listen and open."

"You see an empty room."

"Boring. Close door. Go up to second door, listen and open."

"You see two trolls."

"Anything else in the room?"

"No."

"We ignore the trolls. Close door. Go up to next door. Listen and open."

"You see an ogre."

"Anything else in the room?"

"A chest."

"We attack the ogre." (They attack the ogre.) "We open the chest."

"Treasure."

"We take the treasure and go back out."

This repeats itself with minor variations over and over again, until the players begin to lose interest. At this point, two things can happen. One, the players give up *D&D*. Two, the DM will spice things up by adding huge treasures with lots of magic items; a bribe to re-awaken players' interest. From here the game runs on borrowed adrenalin; and though tackling forty-eight white dragons single-handed and winning may give a thrill at first, pretty soon forty-eight white dragons seem as tame as forty-eight kobolds, or even four kobolds. At this point, nothing can save the game.

There are several morals to be drawn from the above. First, putting 100,000 gp in each room is no substitute for good design. You don't need to point out that your dungeon isn't a bit like the one I have just described; I know it isn't, but I know some dungeons that are, and I expect you do too.

Secondly, since disillusionment will take a couple of years to reach its final stages, it is a tribute to the strength of *D&D* as a game, that players stick with it that long. Name me a wargame that people play every week for two years. There are few of them around.

Thirdly, the fact that the bribe works at all is quite interesting. It leads to the question of why players want treasure, magic, experience points, etc. There is the obvious answer, but there is also another, which is related to the paradox that *D&D* is a game with no ending and no winners. A game has a winner virtually by definition, and I suspect that sometimes players are off-balance because though they appear to be playing a game, they have no prospects of winning, since there is no victory. Therefore they define for themselves a sort of "winning", which is going up experience levels as quickly as possible. In a dungeon where this is easy, they feel themselves to be "winning" more than they do in a dungeon where progress is slower. This is missing out on the potential of *D&D*, which is better thought of as a pastime than a game. It can be likened to fishing, in which there is again no winner. The object of fishing is to catch fish, just as the object of *D&D* is to gain treasure, but the main purpose of a fishing trip is to have a pleasant time whether fish are caught or not. Similarly, one can have a very entertaining *D&D* session without finding masses of treasure. It's nice if you do find a haul, of course, but that should be incidental.

For a satisfying campaign along these lines, some effort is required. The players must play imaginatively; the DM must provide scope for them to do so. This means creative dungeon design; ruler and dice alone are not enough.

Now, there is an excellent game called *Sorcerer's Cave* in which the entire point is to drag up treasure, and you win by doing so. It's great fun, and a good way to spend the odd half-hour. However, it is not Fantasy Role-Playing (FRP hereafter). The merit of FRP is that it goes beyond *Sorcerer's Cave*, and it is a shame to reduce *D&D* (and to me *D&D* and FRP are synonymous) to such a level. In FRP you actually have a chance to step outside dull urban existence and into the fantasy novel of your choice. Sheer escapism, but what's wrong with that? The better the escape, the more enjoyment to be obtained from it.

We now arrive at point one: it would be a dull novel that consisted entirely of identical money-grubbing expeditions which conformed to the pattern of fight-loot, ad nauseum. If an FRP game is going to get anywhere, there must be provision for more than fighting and looting.

But hark, I hear point two approaching. In novels characters don't go dungeoneering if they can help it; indeed, catacombs stocked with goodies and every monster under the sun tend not to appear. This is true, but it is necessary to strike a balance. It is possible to have FRP without a dungeon; *Chivalry & Sorcery* is that, more or less. The trouble is, the more "realistic" your fantasy world is, the more demanding the game becomes to play, in terms of time, imagination, and acting ability needed. In the perfect world there would be professional gamesmasters, and those who wished could become professional players. Alas, most of us have to earn a living in other ways, and that reduces the time available for creating whole countries in minute detail. The advantage of dungeon-bashing is that it provides structure while allowing freedom for development. In some FRP games, there can be a feeling of "what do we do now?" at times. Sometimes the gamesmaster will come up with some new idea, but sometimes his imagination will let him down. One can get up to all sorts of adventures, but if this falls down, there is always the staple to fall back on — the dungeon.

The argument so far, then is that *D&D* in its highest form allows players the fun of actually taking part in a fantasy "novel", but not at such a high level as to demand that each player should be Sir John Gielgud.

(To digress, I believe that the restrictions on some character classes, though they might be viewed as disadvantages, are more the reverse. Restrictions make it easier to play "in character" by dictating necessary attitudes. A paladin should be noted by his largesse and flamboyant acts of charity; these make him more interesting than a stereotyped fighting-man.)

What are the ingredients that the DM should provide to make his dungeon interesting? If the game is to generate the same interest as a novel, it must have the same ingredients: characters and plot.

It is not necessary to construct the entire dungeon from the outset, but it is necessary to plan it. This planning includes the creation of a cast of non-player characters. The characters generate plots, into which the players may step. The characters and plots together generate the contents of the dungeon.

I must emphasise the importance of a strong cast of NPCs in any dungeon that is intended to be used continually over a period of time. It is possible to make a dungeon interesting without them, but this requires immense efforts of imagination to keep up the players' involvement. Even then, one is missing out on some things. A con-type character is hard to play in a dungeon campaign when there are no NPCs to con, to give but one example.

It should also be emphasised that NPCs should be a lot more than just an abundance of the regulation "Little Old Men". These can provide light relief, but they are a passive figure, little more than talking wall-paper. The true NPC should be as active as player-characters. If NPCs are to appear credible, they ought to be doing something, unless they have good reasons for their inactivity. And it is when the plans and activities of NPCs and those of the player-characters interact that the best games of *D&D* result.

Before building your dungeon, then, draw up your main cast list. Others can be added to it as time goes by, but you need some grasp of what is going on from the beginning. NPCs can be fitted into one of four main categories: dungeon dignitaries, dungeon denizens, overground dignitaries, and dungeon raiders. These can be subdivided into those who are still alive, and those who are purely historical, but still cast long shadows in the shape of artifacts, legends, etc. There are also those who are believed to be historical but are actually still around if the players but knew it. Let us take them in order:

Dungeon Dignitaries

There is one question you cannot escape — why is your dungeon there? The answer may be improbable, but must exist. There are two sorts of dungeon, the accidental and the deliberate. The deliberate sort was actually created by someone, and that gives us character number one, the chief. There are lots of things you need to know about him. Is he still around? Why did he build such a curious construction anyway? Was it: as an assault course for the local college of magic; because his father and grandfather before him were in the dungeon-building trade; for some other reason? (By the way, I'm not suggesting that you should tell the players the answer; you can give them clues occasionally, but they should

have to piece together the story themselves from what they find.)

The more information you have, the better feeling for the campaign you will have. Start off with something simple, and keep asking yourself questions, yes or no ones if possible. Each answer should trigger off more questions, and eventually all sorts of things get built up.

I'll show you what I mean. Let us suppose we are starting a dungeon. It was deliberately created by one man; let us call him Abram Frunze, a notorious wizard. Why did he build it? The first reason will do. Is he alive? Yes. Is the dungeon still used in its original capacity? No. Why not? (Think of an answer – any answer.) Frunze and the director of the college had a tiff. Who is the director? He's called Zoltan, and he's got blue skin (why not?). Are Zoltan and Frunze still enemies? Yes. Are they actively hostile? Yes. Has Frunze any allies? Yes. Good or evil? Evil. Has Zoltan got Good allies, then? Yes. The local monarch? Yes. Is he very helpful, this monarch? No. Why not? He's racialist. Does Zoltan send parties to raid the dungeon and attack Frunze? No. Why not? It's too strongly defended. What is Frunze up to at the moment? Lacing the dungeon with treasure to tempt magicians from the college into the traps. Is the plan working? No. What is Zoltan doing? Trying to hire foreigners (the players, perhaps) to attack Frunze. And so on. Already the picture is beginning to build up of a conflict between the two sides which the players will gradually uncover, and then join in on one side or the other. Or perhaps they will find a third side to the dispute, or remain out of it, exploiting it. The scenario has taken no longer to make up than it has to type, yet it suggests themes for dungeon construction – there will be features which are relics of its old use as an assault course for magicians, and others which reflect its new use as a fortification.

With the accidental dungeon, use a similar method, but this time assume the dungeon grew up accidentally, rather than being designed by a NPC. For instance, we might have a system of caves that were taken over by Orcs as a lair. One of the Orcs was a bungling magician, who, playing around with a powerful artifact he had found, accidentally released a number of extra-dimensional monsters from other planes, which then dispersed around the cave system. Continue from here.

In the case of Frunze's dungeon, we can assume that he makes some effort to maintain the dungeon. Traps sprung may be re-set. Areas looted may be re-populated. Damaged features may be repaired. To do all this, he may require some help. So, besides the chief, the deliberate dungeon, being large, has a full-scale works department to keep it in order; the personnel involved are sometimes encountered by players as they go about their business.

In the accidental dungeon, there is no central organisation to repair damage, and traps sprung may go unset. There may still be some loose authority over parts of the dungeon. In the example cited, the Orc leader and his lieutenants might count as dignitaries over at least the upper levels, and character profiles can be drawn up for them in the same fashion as for Frunze and Zoltan.

Dungeon Denizens

Here we come to the folk who live down the dungeon, though they have no other involvement in it. They include those who have been invited in by chief, and others who have wandered in for other reasons. I have known player-characters take to dungeon living, thus becoming subject to the necessities of beating off NPC adventurers, a curious turn-around. It does at least prove that living down a dungeon is not a totally stupid thing for a NPC to do.

With each NPC, ask yourself who are they, why are they there, where did they come from and what are they going to do next? Plus any other questions suggested by the answers to any of those. When you know who is going to be down the dungeon, you can tailor the dungeon to their needs when it comes to construction. This goes for prominent non-human occupants as well as for humans.

Another thing to remember is the Golden Rule of *D&D,* which is, what goes for player characters goes for NPCs as well. Ergo, you can't put a 4th level magician on his own into a room and imagine that he will continue to live there happily. The mortality rate for unaccompanied 4th level magicians is very high. Anyone living down a dungeon should be provided with sufficient defence to stay alive.

There is another rule, which is that characters generate items generate plots. Suppose that Abram Frunze needed help conjuring up demons, and so invited in a lich, name of Heinrich Focalgarters, and gave him a complex on the 6th level. Now Focalgarters had a bodyguard called Samson Spidersoul, a powerful fighter who met an untimely end when a cloud giant decided to use him as a toothpick. But the bodyguard of a high-level magician will have had some useful magic weapons and armour made for him. And they will still be around, perhaps in the dungeon. We have the beginnings of a "collect-the-set" plot, where players hunt for all the associated magic items, either to use them, or destroy them. And all sorts of things start suggesting themselves. Perhaps someone else is trying to collect the set; perhaps for a different reason. It may be that something special will happen once the various items of the set are re-united. Perhaps the other searchers know this, and the players don't. And what about that name "Spidersoul"? It was just the first thing that came into my head, but suppose that Samson were a man with the soul of a spider? Supposing the items connected with him have some power relating to spiders; attracting them, for example? Perhaps if a number of them are collected by one individual, the Spidersoul will come back and take over. You tell me. Random associations are a great help in stimulating the imagination.

Overground Dignitaries

Here we find all the important NPCs who live outside the dungeon, Zoltan among them. First, we need more information about the dungeon; where is it, what sort of country, how far from town, and so on. Who are the important figures in the town? There is some sort of governor; what's he like? What's his name? Dizzy Gillespie. Come now! All right, Gizzy Dillespy. That'll do. What is he planning? To rid the town of magicians. Ah, so he's no friend of Zoltan? No. The plot thickens – the college of magic will have to go underground at least metaphorically. Why is he against magicians? His daughter was abducted by one. Aha, we scent another plot. Perhaps the players will find clues to the whereabouts of Dillespy's daughter. Perhaps they will try and sell him the information. Perhaps he won't believe them. Over to you.

You can build up biographies about some other local personalities: a resident alchemist, perhaps; a baron in the vicinity; the local priest (what's the local religion like? Cults? Counter-cults?) and so on. You might like a few secret societies as well just to make things more complicated. The more the players have to involve themselves with the better, and the more things you put down the dungeon. For instance, the local secret cult of the god Praxitiles had a sacred statue stolen, and the thief, finding it rather too hot to handle, hid it down the dungeon. The secret cult would like it back, but on the other hand, it is one of their rules that any non-cult member who sets eyes on it must be put to death. The players don't know this, unless one of them joins the cult, but that could cause further complications. And what the Priest of Praxitiles thinks of Frunze, or Zoltan, or Dillespy even, is another matter . . .

Dungeon Raiders

These are probably the least important group; deal with them when you see fit. They are adventurers attracted to the dungeon like flies to a pot of honey, rivals of the players in the search for treasure.

Once again, remember that sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. The successful party is the balanced party; magicians and fighters need one another like musket needs pike. Therefore, you are not likely to find a party consisting solely of one class, unless they are very well-equipped. If players meet other adventurers, they are going to form a mixed party like that of the players, unless the encounter is with a fragment of a larger party which split up after heavy fighting. In which case the fragment might be only too delighted with a safe escort out of the dungeon.

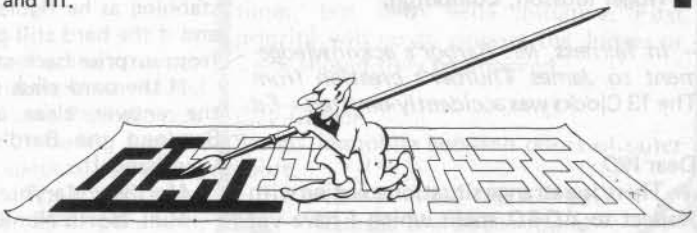
Some may be uninteresting, and not worth spending much time on, but some can be more imaginative. As an example of this, I can do no better than quote M. Gascoigne's two paladins in *White Dwarf 19.* These two furnish a superb example of the sort of mini-plot that players can get involved in. Basically, you have two paladins, one of whom is young and successful, the other being old, out-of-luck and down-at-heel. Number two is getting decidedly envious of number one, and is in danger of losing his paladinhood as a result. If these two fell in with the players, the more mischievous amongst them might well be tempted to give number two a helping hand a little further down the slippery slope, while the clerics would want to try and bolster his confidence by arranging encounters where he could seem to triumph (with a little discreet help) – though these good intentions might be thwarted by those in the party of more questionable alignment.

One way of handling these rival parties is to keep a couple of spots on your wandering monster tables labelled "adventurers", and then pick one randomly from your list of parties in the area when necessary. This list can be updated from time to time as you see fit.

The most successful characters are those that develop the most complete personae. And this development is not anything that can occur just through fighting and looting, but is dependent on elaborate involvements between the character and his environment. The measure of the successful dungeon is not how many high-level characters it has, but how many *interesting* characters, random treasure tables are not enough – you must plan, and you must plot.

You don't have to, indeed, should not, unload the whole background onto the players at once. Let them find out a bit at a time; and the more they piece together themselves the more fun it will be. Some of the sub-plots may never arise in the course of play; but equally, you don't have to decide absolutely everything well in advance; extra ideas can be incorporated as play proceeds. A statue put in purely for decoration might reveal itself as a focus for some story, and can have a history and a magic power tacked onto it.

In the second part of this article I shall deal with the physical design of the dungeon, and populating the rooms. Architecture and room contents will be suggested by the plan of the campaign, as I have demonstrated. But this will only account for so much. Not every corridor will have some important item with a story of its own; not every room will contain notable denizens or treasures with a history. So even when you have the feel of what plots are brewing, there is still the task of putting in the routine stuff – the curves of every corridor and the contents of every room. So these will be out next objects of discussion, in parts II and III. ■



Dear *WD*,

Your *Fiend Factory* of issue 24 is something I cannot pass by without comment. I was most interested to see Andrew Key's statistics for the Llort, or 'nilbogic troll'. This is a curious case of independent invention, for exactly such a monster was proposed in the course of the original correspondence between Don Turnbull and myself on the subject of Nilbogs, and its degenerative powers discussed. I'm pleased to see the creature get into print.

Actually, there is a rare form of inverted (or perverted) nilbogism that affects trolls, which produces a creature known as the Bunduntroll (and you can figure out the etymology of that yourself). This looks much like an ordinary troll, with statistics much the same. But it has one very odd property: in combat, whenever it strikes an opponent, the damage it does is not subtracted from the opponent's hit points, but added on! Furthermore this gain in hit points is permanent — or can be; sometimes the extra hit points are 'healed' away at the standard rate, or lost to the effects of healing potions. There is, of course, a snag. If a character exceeds his maximum possible normal total of hit points, taking class, level and constitution into account, then he bursts in a most spectacular manner. One can imagine unlearned adventurers queuing up to be hit until this happens the first time, whereupon panic ensues. Yes, there is one advantage in rolling a 1 every time you go up a level.

As for the Todal, if Mr Barbor sees fit to quote liberally from James Thurber (whose creation the todal is), he might at least put in an acknowledgement.

Implausible though it may seem, the Bon(n)acon is actually a 'genuine' mythological creature from the middle ages. Statistics for it have been published before, but the 'pegaso-bonacon' is certainly original. Presumably it lives on a diet of beans.

Yours sincerely,
Roger Musson, Edinburgh.

— In fairness, Mr. Barbor's acknowledgement to James Thurber's creation from The 13 Clocks *was accidently omitted.—Ed*

Dear *WD*,

There is a strange situation existing with respect to *AD&D* spells which I have yet to see resolved. There is a 99% effective anti-magic spell in existence, clearly the most powerful defensive spell of all, yet it is available to 3rd level clerics. Obviously I'm talking about the 2nd level clerical spell *silence, 15' radius*, which negates the verbal components of spells (only 3 spells have no verbal component) and prevents the use of scrolls and magic items with key words. Thus magic-users are effectively reduced to weak, dagger-armed fighters at close quarters. Surely this must be wrong; the original function of the spell was to quieten noisy parties, not to enable a group of low-level fighters and a 3rd level cleric to take out a 14th level MU?

. . . where's that Questions and Answers page 73% of the readership were in favour of? This could be the first question it answers.

Yours in confusion,
Jon Gilbert, Stansted, Essex.

— Rather than have a Questions & Answers *page, we have decided to incorporate readers' queries into the* Letters *page.*

Firstly, remember the DM has the final say in any schism over rule interpretation. Our comments are only informed opinion.

Concerning the silence *spell, the rules are clear — no spells can be cast within the radius! If the spell not cast at the magic-user, he may simply move out of the area; if the spell were cast at him, he will have a saving throw — and the 13th level MU would only need an 8. Incidentally, the cleric would have to be at least 5th level to have this spell available. We feel that the rules cover this point adequately and that the spell is not too powerful, after all a 1st level MU can cast* charm person *at the 13th level MU with the same chance of success!*

However, if you still feel that this makes the spell too powerful for your campaign, you could rule that the verbal component is still effective even though it cannot be heard. This would limit the effectiveness of the spell as it would only prevent those that require the victim to hear instructions or those that affect all who hear it. — Ed.

Dear *WD*,

I am a player of *AD&D* and have the *Player's Handbook*, after playing the game last night and just acquiring the level of Bard, myself and the DM had an argument over the bard's thieving abilities, mainly back-stabbing.

After a discussion I decided to write to you to find out about our problem. The problem is as follows: The bard character class fights on the fighters table and it also retains its previous thieving abilities, I would like to know if this includes back-stabbing as he fights on the fighter tables and if the bard still gets quadruple damage from surprise back-stabs.

If the bard class does could you make the answer clear as soon as possible, Sarglond the Bard's death could be in your hands!

Matthew Marynicz,
Hull, North Humberside.

By strict interpretation of the Player's Handbook, *a bard should be able to attack from behind with surprise as if a thief of whatever level he previously attained; but I would suggest that the rules for multi-classed characters on p.33 of the* Player's Handbook *be invoked, and the bard would lose all experience gained on the trip during which he attempted the back-stab.*

I would further point out that according to the Dungeon Master's Guide, *p.75, any character may attack a helpless opponent as if an assassin, using the assassination tables from the* DMG. *—Ed*

Dear *WD*,

I had expected to see much learned discourse upon Bill Milne's power point spell casting system *(White Dwarf 23)* in the letters page of the last issue, and had so refrained from sending in my own thoughts upon the article, it having failed to materialise here are my opinions. First of all I would like to thank Bill Milne for putting in much valuable spade work on the subject but I do have some criticisms. Foremost is the strange allocation of points for the constitution, by which a low constitution is beneficial, this is illogical. Spell casting and the control of the other-plane energies is exhausting work (thus the lengthy periods of rest required to recover strength), a character with a low constitution is physically weak, will become tired more easily, and will thus be able to control less of this other-plane energy before he needs a rest than his physically superior fellow. As an alternative, I think that the opposite, i.e. 2 power points per point of constitution, should be employed. I do not think that Bill Milne's argument that it will help the class fixing decision provides a strong enough case for the introduction of a logical fallacy; and anyhow nobody ever called Gandalf a seven stone weakling! Another point that I would like to make is that I would think that clerics, only receiving an extra 10 points per level, are being shortchanged, especially at the higher levels. I suggest that a figure of 15 pts per level might be more appropriate.

To move into a constructive vein, the flexibility of the power point system is, of course, its strongest selling point. This flexibility can be extended by making the potency of some spells (eg *hold portal, push, fireball)* dependent upon the number of points the spellcaster is willing to expend — a MU might put *hold portal* upon a door with a strength of 50 points, and only a *knock* spell with a strength of more than 50 points will open the door. This principle can be extended to include the duration of some spells (eg *light, tongues)* and the range of other spells (eg the *detection* spells). I would recommend however that the limits imposed in the *AD&D* manual are kept. This improves the relation between the amount of energy used in the spell and the number of points expended by the spell-caster.

Yours faithfully,
R.N. Roper, Crookes, Sheffield.

POSTAGE PAID
MIDDLE EARTH
BIRITH 10 MAR 3019 CITY P.O.
hite Dwarf,
1 Dalling Road,
London W6 0JD.

LOWER CANON COURT

by Tony Chamberlain & Paul Skidmore

A clerical AD&D skirmish for a large number of players.

A party of adventurers was recently outraged by a medium level cleric, who acted contrary to his alignment and profession to jeopardise them. Rough justice was called for, but Law and Reason prevailed and he was hauled off to base as a prisoner. Trial presented something of a problem until the ancient Canon Court of the City State was remembered, where a cleric may be tried by his peers. Such a court was set up and proved highly entertaining. The prisoner was given one last chance to redeem himself. In fact, he attempted to escape, grabbed the Headsman's sword and laid about him, thus sealing his fate. Judgement was duly given when order was restored; the verdict of "guilty" being a forgone conclusion. The traitor was stripped of all clerical items, branded, ears and nose slit (charisma lowered to 3) and hurled naked into the street. Justice was certainly seen to be done!

The Plan of the Court

The Court building is about 65 feet wide, 125 feet long and 50 feet high. The ceiling is of arched, carved stone, pierced at intervals with two foot wide slits for light and ventilation. Cressets are placed along the walls in the locations shown (●). The judges sit on a raised dais, three feet above the Court. Each chapel has a simple altar table. Illumination within the chapels is scanty indeed. Two eight-foot double doors give access onto the street (Court House Lane) and are locked by the Court Guard just before the Court is in session. The clay golem stands on a two feet high raised dais between the two doors. To the right of the main doors are steps leading down to the crypt and to the left of the doors are steps leading up, via a small platform seven feet from the ground, to the door giving access to the tower. The entrance to both tower and crypt are protected by *glyphs of warding* cast by Judges Thadrock and Belsam. Each *glyph* causes 12 points of electrical damage.

Court in Session

The DM should allocate one of the characters to each player, who should attempt to follow the personality profile as closely as possible.

The Hall of Court may be laid out according to the plan using a play aid, such as *Dungeon Floor Plans*, and figures.

Players write down their orders every round including the DM, who acts for non-player characters. The orders are then read by the DM in alphabetical order, though all actions are considered to be simultaneous. Standard *AD&D* rules and common sense will ensure the game progresses.

Spells such as *know alignment, augury* or *divination* will not work within the confines of the Court.

A typical trial would start by the Clerk of Court reading the charges, which will no doubt be lengthy and abstruse. The prisoner may then reply and any evidence be presented. Long before this, however, the unruly elements will require reproof and Court may be temporarily adjourned due to incursions by undead. A verdict of some sort will eventually be arrived at and sentence carried out.

Order in Court

The following groups of characters make up the Court:

Officials

Three judges, alignment LG, LN and LE, sit at the head of the Court and are controlled by the DM. The Judges give form to the proceedings and more scope for the DM to promote action. They act with great pomp and demand great respect. The clay golem, which was placed in Court by Boz the Demented during his reign as Chief Justice has never animated, but is rumoured to activate should Chaos prevail. The Clerk sits at a table before the Judges, surrounded by chests containing assorted records, moneys, etc., and will act as prosecutor. He has charge of the Guard, which consists of six Sergeants-at-Mace, and also the Headsman.

Prisoner

The prisoner stands alone before the Officials to answer the various charges. He is a normal player character and is allowed all his weapons and magical items. He should not be higher than sixth level of ability. He will be judged on his actions during the trial.

Clerics

These represent the canonical jury and will generally listen to the proceedings of the inner court. They may freely move to the outer court or chapels to meditate, pray or plot. A small number of clerics will be disinterested in proceedings against the prisoner and will attempt to further their own designs.

The Interlopers

Fame of the Courts' impartial justice has spread and attracted the attention of various intrepid characters, who are attending in clerical disguise.

The Undead

The Court acts as a focus for the attention of undead and the foundations are riddled with burrows for their use. Periodic outbreaks of undead occur during judicial proceedings with the object of disrupting them and killing clerics. The chance of an outbreak occurring is 20% per turn.

UNDEAD TABLE

% Dice	Type	No. Appearing
01 – 18	Skeletons	4 – 16
19 – 34	Zombies	2 – 8
35 – 63	Ghouls	2 – 8
64 – 84	Shadows	1 – 6
85 – 92	Wights	1 – 4
93 – 100	Wraiths	1 – 2

Undead are 90% likely to burrow into the locations given below and issue suddenly for a concerted attack. Each undead will attempt to attack a different cleric and will only be turned if the attacked cleric has a successful turning throw of the dice; mass turning is not allowed.

UNDEAD LOCATION TABLE

% Dice	Location
01 – 39	Crypt
40 – 49	Tower Basement
50 – 60	Chapel No. 1
60 – 70	Chapel No. 2
70 – 75	Chapel No. 3
76 – 80	Chapel No. 4
81 – 87	Inner Court
88 – 100	Outer Court

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

The Judges

Each armed with *Mace + 2*

Thadrock	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	5	18	18	10	14	14

Level = 6 HTK = 21 AC = 3 Align = LG

Belsam	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	9	18	18	11	12	16

Level = 6 HTK = 22 AC = 3 Align = LE

Chief Justice

Jedram	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	12	18	18	17	12	18

Level = 7 HTK = 29 AC = 3 Align = LN

Sergeants-at-Mace

Six men stationed at strategic points in the inner court. These are fighters with statistics as follows:

Level = 3 AC = 4 HTK = 25 Align = LN

Arms: + 3 Mace

Will obey only Court Officials, unless bribed.

Headsman

Kendreck	S	I	W	D	Do	Ch
Fighter	16	6	9	15	13	5

Level = 6 HTK = 26 AC = 5 Align = LE

Arms: Twohanded + 4 Sword

Will guard prisoner with great care at all times, but with little initiative. First priority will be to protect the Judges or Clerk should they be attacked.

Clay Golem

Stands immobile between doors of outer court.

AC = 7 HTK = 50

Damage 3 – 30 per round

Clerk of Court

Sardathrion	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	13	17	17	14	10	15

Level = 7 HTK = 34 AC = 5 Align = LE
You are official and fussy. Keep order, deal firmly with troublemakers; ensure the case progresses. The condemned's possessions become yours — but justice must be seen to be done.
Spells: *Command; cause light wounds*
Arms: *Ring of Spell Turning*
Dust of Sneezing and Choking, ¼ strength (4 pinches)
Command of 6 Sergeants-at-Mace

Cloris	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	9	15	12	8	18	15

Level = 3 HTK = 17 AC =3 Align = LE
The weak must be punished if they break the rules. However, you know that a powerful contender for the post of Temple Registrar, to which you aspire, has hired an assassin for your demise.
Spells: *Fear; blindness; spiritual hammer*
Arms: *Staff + 1*
Potion of Flying

Brandoch	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	11	5	17	7	10	8

Level = 5 HTK = 17 AC = 4 Align = CE
You feel the Court to be a farce and all who obey the law stupid. Do all you can to embarrass Court Officials and Guards.
Spells: *Create water; continual light*
Arms: *Hammer +1*
Gem of Brightness (3 charges)
Potion of Climbing

Balzac	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	8	10	12	12	7	12

Level = 3 HTK = 16 AC = 6 Align = CG
Rumour suggests that the Clerk of the Court was responsible for ravishing your daughter, and you wish to see him punished, for he must be evil. You are aware that his position gives him great power, but no right.
Spells: *Create water; silence 15' radius*
Arms: *Staff of Withering* (3 charges only)
Potion of Flying

Gimbel	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	10	13	17	17	10	14

Level = 4 HTK = 18 AC = 2 Align = NG
Honest to a fault, you will denounce friend or foe alike if evil is suspected — and evil is everywhere. You preach volubly on this fact every day at the market.
Spells: *Bless; dispel magic*
Arms: *Rod of Polymorph* (1 charge)
Silver Horn of Valhalla
Mace

Styphon	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	10	11	12	14	16	10

Level = 5 HTK = 25 AC = 4 Align = NG
You believe in justice for all, which you conceive as different from the law — the law is an Ass. It is the true character of the accused that is important and you do not intend to see him "rail-roaded" by the lawfuls.
Spells: *Hold person, continual lights* (two)
Arms: *Mace + 2*
Keoghtom's Ointment

Lucus	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	11	14	14	10	16	6

Level = 3 HTK = 16 AC = 4 Align = LN
Good and evil must be balanced provided the law is not bent in the slightest. You consider Contempt of Court (or its officials) to be the ultimate disgrace and will punish those who commit it.
Spells: *Command; cause light wounds*
Arms: *Rod of Smiting* (3 charges only)
Potion of Undead Control (Zombies)
Mace

Belphorus	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	12	18	14	10	10	10

Level = 3 HTK = 14 AC = 1 Align = CE
Having a deep disgust of lawful proceedings you have been plotting the downfall and disgrace of the Court for years. You have obtained the Amulet of a Demon and intend to summon it . . . when the time is ripe!
Spell: *Cause light wounds*
Arms: *Mace +1*
Amulet of Demon Type IV

Ptosphe	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	9	10	18	11	10	15

Level = 5 HTK = 31 AC = 8 Align = CG
You are a "hippy" who loves flowers and believes in goodness and freedom. Make love not war — tell the world of this.
Spells: *Create food; snake charm*
Arms: *Wand of Wonder* (8 charges)

Dakon	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	9	10	14	16	17	18

Level = 3 HTK = 22 AC = 5 Align = LE
"Sentence first, verdict afterwards", is your opinion. Anyone caught out must be guilty and deserve a punishment to fit the crime. This must be urged at all costs before the do-gooders ruin everything.
Spells: *Cause light wounds; bestow curse*
Arms: *Wand of Magic Missile* (3d4 + 3 only; 2 charges)
Mace

Tormalen	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	8	11	18	10	7	12

Level = 4 HTK = 22 AC = 6 Align = NE
Whichever faction becomes dominant, you must act to reverse the situation. Anyone not taking a full part in proceedings should be goaded into action.
Spell: *Dispel magic; create water*
Arms: Flail
Wand of Wonder (5 charges)
Potion of Flying

Zosimos	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	16	15	17	14	12	12

Level = 5 HTK = 28 AC = 3 Align = CN
Today, the gods have selected Green to be the colour of disapproval. Good or evil makes little difference — you must attack those who bear the cursed colour, but be subtle.
Spells: *Sticks to snakes, create water*
Arms: *Rod of Absorption* (1 charge initially)
Mace
Potion of Levitation

Dyle	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	15	12	14	14	10	9

Level = 3 HTK = 17 AC = 2 Align = LE
You have nothing but contempt for someone weak or stupid enough to be caught. However, the situation may be used to denounce accomplices, especially if they appear of good alignment.
Spells: *Cause light wounds; spiritual hammer; dispel magic*
Arms: *Mace + 1*
Potion of Levitation

Dylath	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	10	11	11	8	13	12

Level = 5 HTK = 18 AC = 6 Align = CN
You fervently believe the accused is innocent. Witnesses must be either easily misled or liars. Any departure from neutrality on the part of Court Officials will provoke you to fury and retribution.
Spell: *Hold person; animate dead*
Arms: *Mace of Disruption*
Potion of Polymorph
Potion of Levitation

Helvius	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	11	14	14	9	15	14

Level = 5 HTK = 23 AC = 6 Align = LG
You are a puritanical bigot, smoking out evil wherever it lurks. Demand maximum sentences after due process of law.
Spells: *Command; silence 15' radius; speak with dead*
Arms: *Wand of Magic Missile* (3d4 + 3)(2 charges)
Flail
Potion of Clairvoyance

Knygathin

	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	8	14	18	18	9	13

Level = 5 HTK = 19 AC = 4 Align = LN

A morose and quiet individual normally, the first chaotic act by anyone will provoke you instantly to fury and an undying hatred of the one concerned.

Spells: *Bless; spiritual hammer; dispel magic*

Arms: *Staff of the Serpent* (Python)
Potion of Extra Healing

Sarcand

	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Paladin	15	10	15	11	14	18

Level = 4 HTK = 29 AC = 4 Align = LG

Evil must be stamped out, especially in a Court of Law. Observe everyone present for evil acts, then work accordingly, selecting the perpetrator of the worst evil to be punished first.

Arms: *Mace +2*
Potion of Clairvoyance
Talisman of Pure Good (1 charge)

Melmoth

	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Illusionist	9	18	9	16	11	12

Level = 5 HTK = 18 AC = 9 Align = CN

For a wager, you bragged that all clerics are fools and you could easily make monkeys of them all. Your friends are waiting outside for proof. Don't disappoint them.

Spells: *Colour spray; dancing lights; phantasmal forces; ventriloquism; fog cloud; paralyzation, deafness*

Arms: *Staff + 1*
Potion of Flying
Potion of Polymorph

Avoosl

	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	11	13	15	14	17	12

Level = 5 HTK = 27 AC = 4 Align = NE

The court is an irrelevance. Create mischeif, particularly if someone can be hurt and the blame given to someone else.

Spells: *Hold person; bestow curse*

Arms: *Mace +2*
Potion of Levitation

Ashtith

	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Houri ½ elf	10	18	9	17	12	18

Level = 5 HTK = 13 AC = 6 Align = CN

Disguised as a female cleric of Droll, an orgiastic cult, you want to lift a few fat purses from a few fat clerics, especially good clerics, as they like to study at first hand what they are to denounce at length in their next sermon.

Spells: *Fascination; jealousy; kiss of wounding*

Arms: *Dagger + 2*
Potion of Extra Healing

Delib

	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Thief	12	12	10	15	12	9

Level = 3 HTK = 12 AC = 7 Align = CE

You are disguised as a cleric in order to divert some moneys to your pockets. Beware, though; the last thief was flayed alive and the guild did nothing . . . the last divine intervention left six of the nine levels of the guild house flooded with boiling water!

Arms: Dagger in boot top

Otranto

	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Cleric	10	15	16	10	14	18

Level = 6 HTK = 27 AC = 5 Align = CN

You devoutly believe in GUTOMANCY, the ability to read guilt or otherwise from an examination of entrails. Best results are always obtained by using a *friend* of the accused . . .

Spells: *Hold person; animate dead*

Arms: *Mace + 4*
Potion of Flying
Potion of Healing

Alvor

	S	I	W	D	Co	Ch
Druid ½ elf	12	13	18	9	12	13

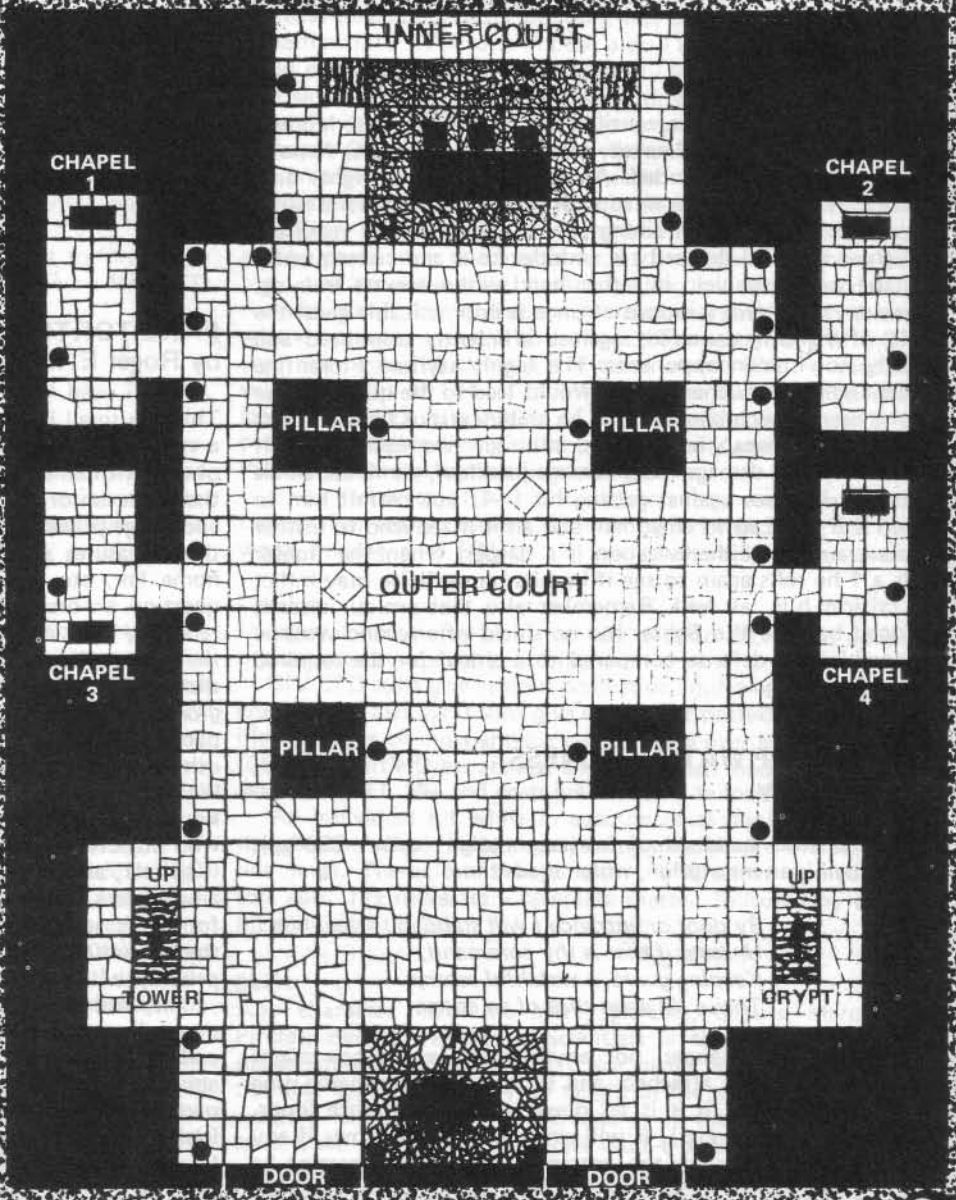
Level = 6 HTK = 21 AC = 7 Align = N

The atmosphere of the Court is depressing. Continually agitate for an open air meeting and use your spells to encourage this.

Spells: *Entangle; heat metal; pyrotechnics; summon insects; produce fire*

Arms: *Sling of Seeking +2*
Dagger

The court should be constructed as shown using graph paper or a play aid such as Dungeon Floor Plans. *The principal characters, apart from the player-cleric on trial, are presented on the slabs above, which should be photocopied, cut out, and distributed among the players by the referee. The clerk of the court is essential, but other characters may be omitted if the DM wishes, or if they are not drawn or dealt out.*



Treasure chest *is a regular feature devoted to readers' ideas for* D&D.

THE BOWL OF EVERLASTING PORRIDGE (after E.T.A.M.) and THE ALPEN HORN
by Barney Sloane

Usually found together, these two great relics of the mighty wizard Brech Phastish are much sought after prizes. The *Bowl* is about a foot in diameter, and of very fragile ceramic nature, with runic signs around the inside rim. Hidden amongst these are two indecipherable words, readable only if a *read magic* spell is cast: "Quaker", and "Oatz". If these are pronounced in quick succession, a great gurgling will fill the air, and porridge will begin to gush freely from the *Bowl,* at a volume of 3' by 1' by 6" per round. This will continue until either a *pollute food & water* spell is cast, or the stopping word is found, hidden on the base of the *Bowl:* "Pots". This is in common. The *Bowl's* worth is 2000 gps, and its encumbrance is 100 gp equivalent.

The *Alpen Horn* is a 12' bronze horn, embossed with ancient bas-reliefs of mighty rituals, such as the cheese-parties of Norse yore . . . If winded, there will sound a particularly disgusting belch, and then a gurgling, much like the *Bowl* above. Following this, ready-made Alpen cereal will pour from the mouth of the *Horn,* in a jet, 10' by 6". This will occur for each puff, but there is a 10% cumulative chance per puff that it will backfire filling the unfortunate's stomach up with Alpen, lots of Alpen. . .

The *Horn* is worth 400gps, and weighs 2000 gps.

HANDEDNESS
by Lew Pulsipher

Players may also roll percentile dice for handedness. Modern percentages are approximated: left-handed males 8%, females 4%, remainder right-handed. A fighter with 15 or higher dexterity may learn to use a weapon or shield in his opposite hand. Eight weeks *intensive* training per weapon/shield is required. A fighter with 18 dexterity is ambidextrous and consequently can use weapons/shield in either hand without extra training. However, using two weapons at once is impracticable given the style of fighting required against efficiently armoured and usually non-human opponents. The highly stylised Florentine rapier-and-main-gauche method would lead to the quick demise of the user in such situations. If an ambidextrous fighter insists on using two weapons at once, subtract two each from hit probability and damage (zero damage possible), eliminate all his dexterity bonuses against getting hit (–4) but permit him to retain 2 if reduced to chainmail and all 4 if reduced to leather armour; and if neither weapon is a dagger, when the fighter rolls a 1 he rolls again to see if he hits himself! He may inflict no critical hits, as well. Remember also that armour class is reduced because the fighter has no shield—the second weapon is worthless in defense compared to a shield for the required kind of fighting.

THE BELL OF WATCHFULNESS
by P.A. Cotley

This is a silver handbell of intricate design (value: 200 gp). On the bell is an inscription, which reads thus:

By door or entrance I will stand,
Unseen, if that is thy command,
Keeping guard, a watchful sentry,
Thrice I'll warn thee of an entry.

The bell has no clapper, nor anything by which one might originally have been attached, and so is incapable of being rung normally. However, if it is set down near any entrance (door, arch, gate, window etc.), it will ring clearly three times if any creature passes through the entrance. This ringing cannot be heard by anyone within a 10' radius of the bell, so the creatures entering will be unaware of the warning.

If the bell is put down and commanded to become unseen or *invisible,* then it will do so. However, if the bell is being held, then nothing will happen. The bell will become visible as soon as it is picked up again. However, it has a mischievous tendency to move around while it is *invisible,* and could be anywhere within a 5' radius of its original position. There is a 10% chance of finding the bell per person searching per round (within the specified area). A party searching on hands and knees is, of course, extremely vulnerable to surprise attacks. The bell reappears in any case 3 turns after it became *invisible.*

PERIAPT OF POISON DECTECTION
by Roger E. Moore

This is a device that determines the edibility of food or water. When this amulet is held near a sample of food or drink, it emits a soft glow to indicate the presence or absence of poison. If the *Periapt* glows a light, bright colour, the food is quite pure and safe to consume. A dull grey glow indicates there are disease-producing agents present that pose a danger to any who eat or drink the substance. A dark, malignant colour shows that the substance has been poisoned, the darker the colour the deadlier the poison. Different varieties of this *Periapt* will use different colours for the different stages but all have dark hues for poison and grey for disease. Gold piece sale value: 10,000.

FAKE TORTURE ITEMS
by Roger E. Moore

This is a small kit, weighing between 5 and 10 lbs, consisting of a variety of needles, cords, iron rods, rusty knife blades, bottles of unidentifiable liquids, etc. It can be carried and used by parties that have an orientation more neutral than evil, and is used to encourage prisoners to become more verbal with regards to where their treasures are, what or who is guarding it, location of the home lair, etc. First, when the party has finished trying to question an orc, goblin, or whatnot which was taken prisoner recently, they all go off into a huddled discussion in view of the prisoner but some distance away. One or two party members should suddenly look utterly horrified and ask the rest of the group not to go through with a certain plan. The rest of the party vehemently disagrees ("You can't deal with orcs any other way!") and orders the objecting member(s) to leave. While the other adventurers start unpacking the fake torture kit, laughing in a maniacal and sadistic manner, the member who objected to the plan goes to the prisoner and begs him/her/it to talk, as there is nothing that can be done to stop the other adventurers. "Please talk! I can't bear to hear you screaming for hours and hours like the last one . . ." In the background, the adventurers can be heard making bets on how long the prisoner will last before . . .(at this point they all laugh again).

Any real use of the fake torture kit as a *real* torture kit will mean alignment shifts to evil for all contributing party members, and all the negative consequences thereof. Using the kit in the above manner should produce at least one morale check on the part of the captive, and possibly several if the would-be torturers look gruesome and mean enough. If it doesn't work, well, at least you tried. ■

Vacc Suits in Traveller BLOWOUT!

by Andy Slack

While it is possible to adventure in any environment using *Traveller* rules, my preference has always been space actions. Thus, it was not long before the rules on vacc suits were expanded. The three types of vacc suit and the associated rules given below are the result.

CIV STD

Civilian Standard vacc suits are typified by 20th century Terran models such as the Apollo EVA suit. TL: 7; Cr 10,000.

They carry the following: Medium range communicator, electic torch, emergency repair kit, anti-glare visor, numerous belt loops and pockets for tools and samples, wristwatch, provision for safety lines, distress flare and homing beacon, sensors to determine external atmosphere type if any, and magnetic compass.

By Imperial law, a spacecraft must carry vacc suits to outfit all crew and high or middle passengers. These may be in the ship's locker, or where they are frequently needed.

A Merchant, Pirate, or Belter character may elect to forego one of his rolls for mustering out benefits, receiving instead a CIV STD vacc suit.

MIL STD

Military Standard vacc suits resemble a skintight leotard of elastic, porous material. Thus clad, a person's own skin acts as his pressure suit, his sweat glands as the temperature control system. TL: 9; Cr 20,000.

Equipment is as for the CIV STD, with the following exceptions: No emergency repair kit carried; magnetic compass replaced by inertial locator; and the following additional items are fitted: Telephone jack and cord for communication in radio silence, facilities for plugging into shipboard air/power supplies to conserve those in the backpack, systems capable of monitoring the wearer's vital signs from a backpack readout or over a radio/computer link, heavy-duty overshoes, geiger counter, and hand calculator.

A Navy, Marine, or Scout character may elect to forego one roll for mustering out benefits, and receive in lieu a MIL STD vacc suit.

Emergency Vacc Suits

These are little more than a man-shaped plastic bag. TL: 8+; Cr 1,000.

Emergency vacc suits carry no equipment other than that required to keep the wearer alive for a short period. They are found scattered throughout all kinds of starship in strategic locations, where they may be grabbed in an emergency by persons with no time for stronger measures.

General

Both CIV STD and MIL STD vacc suits have backpacks and helmets, which are interchangeable in emergencies. These contain facilities for the supply of air, heating/cooling as necessary, and limited amounts of water and emergency rations. Emergency vacc suits have only an air supply. CIV STD or MIL STD vacc suits can support their occupants for 16 hours 40 minutes, and for up to one week provided replacement air tanks are available. Emergency vacc suits can support their occupants for 2 hours and replacement air tanks are not feasible.

Standard EVA kits are available for CIV STD and MIL STD suits, consisting of a rocket pack capable of up to 3" of acceleration, and re-entry shield enabling a safe re-entry at speeds up to 2". Such kits are available at TL 8+, costing Cr 5,000. Ships come equipped with three such kits per thousand tons of displacement; minimum three kits on a starship and one on a non-starship.

Fitting and Donning

CIV STD suits may be purchased off-the-peg at any class A or B starport. Their size is determined by a 2d6 throw, and is prominently stencilled on them. A character may wear such a suit if any one of his physical characteristics (strength, dexterity or endurance) is the same as the suit's size.

MIL STD suits must be tailor-made for the wearer, a process requiring 6–8 weeks at a class A starport, during which the character must be available for weekly fittings. A character must have the same physical characteristics and gender as the owner to don such a suit.

Emergency vacc suits can be worn by anyone. Characters may only wear vacc suits designed for their species.

To don a vacc suit requires two minutes for a CIV STD; ten minutes for a MIL STD; 15 seconds for an emergency suit. Once donned, a MIL STD suit can be worn minus the helmet and backpack for several days without penalty, during which time the helmet and backpack can be donned in 30 seconds. If caught by surprise by explosive decompression, a character must make a roll of 9+ to don a suit before he falls unconscious. DMs are: -5 if no vacc suit skill; + vacc suit skill; + dexterity. An unconscious character may be stuffed into an emergency suit by a comrade, using the same throw.

Use

CIV STD vacc suits are bulky and have clumsy gauntlets. If *Azhanti High Lightning* or *Snapshot* are used, they suffer the movement penalties laid down for vacc suits. Further, no dexterity bonuses may be claimed by a character in such a suit, and all skills requiring fine manipulation suffer a DM of -2 on success rolls. Emergency vacc suits impose a DM of -5 on such skills, and likewise negate dexterity bonuses, but do not suffer movement penalties. MIL STD suits impose a skill DM of -1, but no movement penalties or negation of dexterity bonuses.

Use the Book 1 procedure for avoiding mishaps when in a vacc suit. Punctures in CIV STD or emergency suits cause loss of pressure; CIV STD vacc suits may be temporarily repaired using the emergency repair kit by the victim or a comrade, throw as for donning a suit when surprised as above. A character exposed to vacuum loses consciousness after about two minutes, and cannot be saved from death after about five minutes. (The referee may care to make these times equal to endurance in combat rounds and thrice endurance in combat rounds respectively, where a combat round is 15 seconds.) The wearer of a MIL STD vacc suit takes 1d6 damage if it is punctured (DM: – vacc suit skill). On a roll of 11+ on 2d6, the puncture is a faceplate shatter, leading to death in any kind of suit unless the victim can be repressurised within five minutes inside an ATV, ship, building etc. Punctured vacc suits must be replaced.

Extended wear of vacc suits causes extreme discomfort and fatigue. For each complete 12 hour period that a suit has been worn, impose a -1 DM on the use of all skills by the wearer.

Combat

In general, the notes from the *Use* section apply, but combat presents certain special problems.

CIV STD suits give armour protection equivalent to cloth; emergency and MIL STD suits give no armour protection, but modified versions of most armour can be fitted over MIL STD units. (CES and Battle Dress are not allowed.) Such modified armour is available at TL 10+ and costs are the same as for normal armour.

An individual hit while in vacuum takes double damage; in the *Azhanti High Lightning* system, wounds are increased by one level. Thereafter, the puncture rules above apply. Also, roll 2d6: 11+ indicates a faceplate shatter, followed by a head hit and instant death.

Skills

Any character from the Navy, Marines, Scouts, Merchants, Pirates, Belters, Nobles or Scientists is considered to have a minimum skill of Vacc Suit-0 for game purposes due to his training. Vacc Suit-0 may be taught in the same way as general weapon familiarisation in *Mercenary*, if the instructor has at least Vacc Suit-1 himself. Vacc Suit-0 is sufficient for most everyday activities, but not strenuous ones or combat. ■

Fiend Factory *is a regular department featuring readers' monsters, edited by Albie Fiore. This issue, a D&D mini-scenario for a 5-6th level party . . .*

The Black Manse

In a small agricultural town set in rolling country, the locals seem unusually depressed. The town was obviously once prosperous, but hard times seem to have come, which is strange as the countryside is rich with crops. Around the town, adventurers may hear some of the following rumours:

The town was under the protection of a kind and benevolent baron, but since his adventurer son returned things have changed. The son's dwarven companions now come and extort crippling taxes from the townsfolk and their punishment for any opposition is extremely severe.

The son rode through the town on his route to the manse when he returned. He is a handsome youth and was in the company of 12 dwarfs.

The former mayor went to the baron's manse, but returned a mindless fool.

Nothing has been seen of the baron or his men since the son's return.

Those who have braved approaching the manse have been scared away by the sounds they have heard, which seemed to them like those of a madhouse.

The manse is sited about a mile and a half from the town. Inside are the son and his friends who appear as dwarfs due to their illusory powers. They are in fact:

DREAM DEMONS

by Phil Masters

No. Appearing:	**1–12**
Armour Class:	**2**
Movement:	**8"/12"**
Hit Dice:	**2d8+3**
Treasure:	**Nx3; Qx2**
Attack:	**Two wings for 1d4 each**
Alignment:	**Chaotic evil**
Intelligence:	**Average**
Monstermark:	**93.33 (level V in 12 levels)**

Dream demons are similar to quasits in nature and strength. However, they specialise in the magic of illusionists (and are very occasionally granted to high level chaotic evil illusionists as familiars). They are usually encountered singly, but small groups are very occasionally encountered.

Their natural appearance is as an 18" black skeleton with huge, gorgeous, butterfly wings, but they can project a powerful *illusion* at will so as to appear as any creature of *less than* human size. If dispelled, this *illusion* can be re-formed in one round (treat all dream demon magic as seventh level power). Whatever their appearance, however, they attack with the razor-sharp edges of their wings.

Dream demons are generally only 15% magic resistant, but this is raised to 50% against spells from illusionists, and they are immune to the following spells: *invisibility, phantasmal force, colour spray, hypnotism* (all forms), *ESP* (all forms), *hallucinatory terrain* and *phantasmal killer.*

The dream demon can use *ventriloquism* and *dancing lights* at will; *phantasmal force* and *hypnotic pattern* three times per day (the pattern being projected from its wing-colours); and the following illusionist spells once per day each: *gaze reflection, invisibility, minor creation* and *maze*. In addition, the dream demon may make one attempt, with 50% probability of success, to take control of any shadow (see *Monster Manual*) encountered.

They are the servants of the son who also is not what he appears. *Shapechanged* to look like the original son who he has slain, is the new lord of the manse — an. . .

INCUBUS

by Roger E. Moore

No. Appearing:	**1**
Armour Class:	**2**
Movement:	**12"/15"**
Hit Dice:	**7**
Treasure:	**G,X**
Attack:	**2 claws for 1d4 each or by weapon type**
Alignment:	**Chaotic evil**
Intelligence:	**Exceptional**
Monstermark:	**1094.85 (level XI in 12 levels)**

Incubi are the male counterparts of the succubi, and like the latter are solitary demons. In its natural form, an incubus appears to be a tall, handsome, male human, though with small horns and fangs, and a large pair of reptilian, scaled wings growing from its shoulders. The incubus has a powerful assortment of spells and abilities to assist it in causing havoc and grief wherever it goes. It can cause *darkness 10' radius, shapechange* (only into a humanoid form of the same height and weight), *hold person, clairvoyance, ESP,* go ethereal, and cause *confusion* at will, one power per round. It may also attempt to *gate* in one Type III demon (60%) or one Type IV demon (40%) with a 70% chance of successfully opening the *gate*, but must reward the called demon in some way and is thus reluctant to do so. Once per day an incubus may also *cause insanity* by touch (-4 saving throw vs. spell); the insanity produced is 90% likely to be homicidal mania (see *Dungeon Master's Guide* for details).

Being a demon-type, incubi have other powers held in common with all demonkind. They have a magic resistance of 75% and are immune to normal or silver weapons. Weapons of +1 power or greater are needed to hit them. An incubus has infravision to 120', a special form of telepathy allowing communication with any intelligent being, and resistance to various attacks — acid gives full damage; cold, electricity (lightning), fire (dragon, magical), and gas (poisonous, etc.), half damage; iron weapon, magic missile, and poison, full damage.

The incubus is also psionic, with a psionic ability of 200, and attack modes of C and E, and defence modes G and I.

There is a 10% chance that a banshee (see *Monster Manual*) will be found accompanying an incubus, otherwise the incubus will usually be alone.

On arrival at the manse, the incubus, while apparently greeting the baron, used his *cause insanity* power. The baron is now suffering from homicidal mania and is locked in a cell in the lower level of the manse. He sits quietly in his cell, but around him is bedlam. The other cells are occupied by his former men, 20 in all, who are all gibbering imbeciles, howling and screaming. Three are still under the control of some strange creatures of the ether that the 'son' unleashed among the prisoners. . .

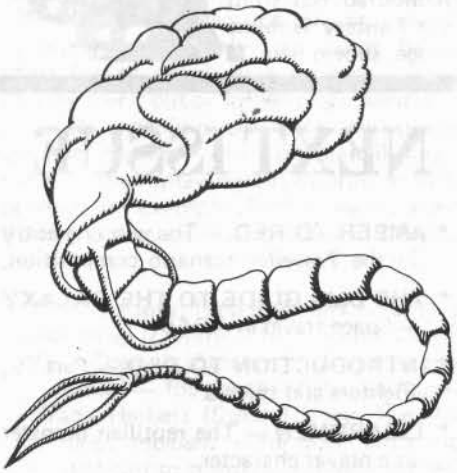
BRAIN SUCKERS

by John R. Gordon

No. Appearing:	**1–3**
Armour Class:	**5**
Movement:	**6"**
Hit Dice:	**1d8+1**
Treasure:	**Nil**
Attack:	**2 per round, both special**
Alignment:	**Chaotic evil**
Intelligence:	**Highly**
Monstermark:	**Inapplicable (suggest level III in 12 levels)**

The brain sucker resembles a large, slimy grey brain, always pulsing, which is attached to a lash resembling a spinal cord encased in slimy, red vertebrae. It moves by writhing this lash and may move flat on the ground or in an upright position. It is approximately 3' 6" long.

It can be found either on the *Prime Material Plane* or in the *Ethereal Plane*. It lurks, waiting for its prey which must be of at least animal intelligence, so that it can feed on them. It has two attack modes: a psionic attack (it has 160 psionic points, recoverable at the rate of 12 per hour, and all attack/defence modes); or a sucker attack. When it uses its sucker attack, if it rolls a hit, the victim must save versus his intelligence on 3d8. If he fails to save, the brain sucker will fade into the victim's body and attempt to take over, the victim must now save versus magic – success means that the brain sucker has gained complete control of the victims mind and all his powers for *only* 1–4 turns; failure means that the brain sucker has gained control for as long as it desires.



The brain sucker can use its psionic powers within its host and to protect its host. Once a week, the victim may try to free himself – he must roll 1d10 in an attempt to roll greater than the intelligence difference between himself and the sucker. If he succeeds, the brain sucker will materialise outside his body and fall to the floor, dead. It will then slowly dematerialise back into the *Ethereal Plane*. If the host is killed, the brain sucker will rematerialise outside the body, taking 1d8 damage in the process. It will then usually wriggle off or flee to the *Etherial Plane* to recuperate.

The brain sucker may leave its host whenever it wishes, causing 1d8 damage when it does so and stunning the host for 10–30 segments, but usually waits until it has reduced its host's intelligence to 4 by feeding on it at the rate of 1 point of intelligence per month. When the host's intelligence is reduced to 4, the sucker must leave the host who will be, by then, a gibbering lunatic. The host may battle the brain sucker psionically and should he manage to slay it, either psionically or on freeing himself as described above, he will regain 1–8 points of intelligence as long as this does not exceed his original score.

The brain sucker can travel to and from the *Ethereal Plane* at will once per turn.

The only other occupant of the manse is in the baron's treasure vault. It was placed to guard his goods and is a . . .

GUARDIAN

by Simon Tilbrook

No. Appearing:	**1**
Armour Class:	**3**
Movement:	**6"/18"**
Hit Dice:	**6d8**
Treasure:	**None, other than what it is guarding**
Attack:	**1 bite for 1–3 plus petrification**
Alignment:	**Neutral**
Intelligence:	**Exceptional**
Monstermark:	**379.68 (level VIII in 12 levels)**

The guardian is a modification of the necrophidius (see *Best of White Dwarf – Articles*) and is created in the same manner except that its creation requires the body of a giant snake, a man-sized humanoid skull, a cockatrice feather and a gem of at least 1,000 gp value.

The guardian is created specifically to protect its creator's treasure, tomb etc. Its spirit can leave its body at any time. It can then move at 18" per turn and retains both its normal senses (sight, hearing, etc.) and its magic resistance of 50%. *Detect invisible* will reveal its presence as a fiery red aura, otherwise it cannot be detected. *(DM's could let elves, dogs, etc. have a chance of noticing 'something' – Ed.)* The spirit can enter and animate any of its petrified victims, one at a time. The animated 'statue' then becomes an 8 hit-dice monster, moving at 3" per turn and attacking every other turn (always attacking last) for 3d6 points of damage. The 'statue' is invulnerable to normal weapons but will take damage from magical weapons. If an attacker fails to make the 'to hit' roll, then his weapon will shatter – magic weapons are permitted a saving roll.

When in its own body, the guardian regenerates at the rate of 1 hit point per turn – even after death. The guardian's spirit may return to its mutilated body (which is defenceless when 'vacant') and it will immediately begin to regenerate. If the gemstone set in its forehead is removed from the remains, it cannot regenerate.

Its magic resistance is permanently functioning and will affect all spells cast within 10' of the guardian's spirit (or approaching within 10' – e.g. *lightning bolts)*. Spells such as *wizard lock* should also be checked (once only) when the guardian first approaches within 10'.

While in spirit form, the guardian is

invulnerable to all physical attacks – even magical weaponry.

Each guardian is created with one weakness usually linked to what it is guarding to prevent betrayal. If its weakness is, say, silver (as in this mini-scenario), then the touch of silver (in any form) 'burns' the guardian's body for 1–3 hit points of damage per hit; the guardian cannot voluntarily touch or pass over silver – not even in its spirit form; if an animated statue is touched by silver, the guardian must immediately leave the statue; it cannot enter a statue which is in contact with silver; its spirit can be pushed back or held at bay by silver; and if its gemstone is touched by silver, then its spirit is permanently banished to Limbo and all petrified victims crumble to dust.

Its weakness is silver and each of the treasure casks that it guards is made of silver. ■

TRILLION CREDIT SQUADRON !!

. . .*GDW* have announced forthcoming titles in the **Traveller** family. First, there is **Trillion Credit Squadron, Adventure 5**, a radical departure in adventures. Instead of role-playing at a personal level, players will be at a higher level, designing space squadrons, and engaging in battles at the fleet level. The adventure will provide the basic rules together with optional rules and at least three different games. The adventure is being used as a **Traveller** tournament in the US at GenCon, GenCon East and Pacific Origins. Competitors will build their squadrons and then pit them against each other. The other planned releases are: **The Argon Gambit/Death Station, Double Adventure 3; Library Data, Supplement 8; Marooned/Marooned Alone, Double Adventure 4; Striker**, a set of rules for 15mm **Traveller** figures; and **Fifth Frontier War**, a boxed game concerning the final battle of the Solomani Rim War. Plans are also afoot to release a **Deluxe Traveller**. . .

CHAOS TERROR

. . .*Chaosium* are to release **Cults of Terror**, a book which covers the 'bad guy' cults of Glorantha. Information regarding previously announced titles shows **Thieves' World** to be a package with a map of Sanctuary including houses and buildings. The maze is left blank for characters to explore on their own, using any role-playing system. **Griffin Mountain** is a 200 page **RuneQuest** book containing information about the land, its residents, leaders, citadels, monsters, trade routes, and over 100 suggested scenarios. **Stormbringer**, the Elric-based role-playing game, is based on the **RuneQuest** system but with radically different magic, maps, scenarios and character sheets. **Call of Chthulhu** is the official H. P. Lovecraft role-playing game and is adapted from **RuneQuest**. . .

. . .*Metagaming* are to launch a magazine based on their own games and activities entitled **Interplay**. . .

ALIENS

. . .Something alien this way comes from *Eon Products*. Two more expansion kits are in preparation for **Cosmic Encounter**, each containing 15 new powers. . .

. . .*Steve Jackson Games* have released three more sets of **Cardboard Heroes**.

These are: **Set 2: Brigands, Orcs and Goblins; Set 3: Half-Orcs, Reptile Men and Kobolds**; and **Set 4: Animals**. . .

. . .*Quicksilver Fantasies* are a new company publishing adventures for fantasy role-playing games. Their first title, **Carnival on Windemere**, is a solo adventure set in a town and provides alternative programs for fighter, assassin or cleric. **Crystal Pleasure Palace** is a solo adventure set in the same town as **Carnival on Windemere** and provides alternative programs for thief, fighter or magic-user. . .

. . .*Task Force Games* have released **Dungeon Tiles**, a boxed play aid for fantasy role-playing games. . .

. . .*Origins VII* is to be held from 3rd–5th July 1981 at the Dunfey Hotel, San Mateo, California. . .

. . .*Games Day '81* will be held at the Royal Horticultural Society's New Hall, Greycoat Street, London SW1 on 26th and 27th September 1981. All those wishing to vote in the **Games Day Awards** will find voting forms available at most hobby shops or may obtain one direct from *Games Workshop* by sending an S.S.A.E. . .

. . .*Citadel Miniatures* intend to release future ranges of figures with a direct tie-in with the most popular role-playing games available. They have recently acquired the UK rights to manufacture the official **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Fiend Folio** range under licence from *TSR*; the official **Traveller** figures under licence from *GDW*; and the official **RuneQuest** figures under licence from *Chaosium*.

RELEASED:

from Citadel

Among *Citadel's* latest releases are those shown below:

On the left is **ES66c: Wizard with Staff**; centre is **ES87a: Valkyre** (both from the **Ral Partha: Personalities and Things that Go 'Bump' in the Night** range). On the right is **WF6: Aggressive Aardvark advancing with Sword** (shades of Cerberus!) from the **Weird Fantasy** range. . .

from Asgard

. . .*Asgard Miniatures* have released a new 15mm science fiction range designed for use with the **Combat 3000** rules published by *Tabletop Games*:

Left is **MSM1515 Trimote Overlord**, right is **MSM1503 Space Marine in Battle Armour** and centre is **MSM1523 Saurian Riding Hunting Lizard**. *Asgard* have also expanded their fantasy ranges with such nasties as **FG10 Giant Armoured Rat** from the **Fantasy Goblins** range, shown here. ■

D&D HOLIDAY

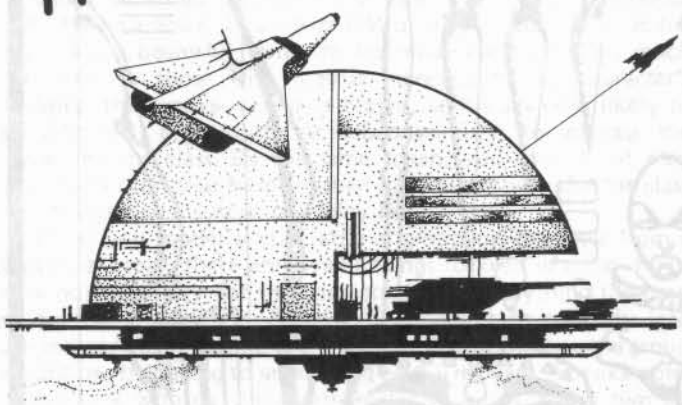
Spend an uninterrupted week or two playing *D&D* on the Isle of Wight. From 12th September our guest house is available for *D&D* fans to meet and play for as long as they wish. Grangewood is only 250 yards from Sandown's long, flat, sandy beach, shops, buses, etc., if you wish to relax in any other way. The bedrooms, TV lounge and separate dining room are all comfortably furnished, and the food is excellent. Bed, breakfast and evening meal will cost £45.00 per week (no VAT payable). Telephone bookings are accepted. Please telephone Eileen Monks on Sandown (0983) 404648 or write to: **Grangewood Guest House, 40 Victoria, Sandown, Isle of Wight, PO36 8AL.**

NEXT ISSUE

* **AMBER TO RED** – The winning entry in the *Traveller* scenario competition.
* **THE DM's GUIDE TO THE GALAXY** – Space travel in *AD&D*.
* **INTRODUCTION TO D&D** – Part IV, Fighters and thieves
* **LIZARDMEN** – The reptilian monster as a player character.

Starbase is a regular department featuring readers' ideas for Traveller. *This issue, a look at various peripheral subjects . . .*

THE SHIP'S LIBRARY



This being the first anniversary of *Starbase*, it would seem an opportune moment to take a look at a few *Traveller* related subjects not normally covered in this column by answering a few of the most frequent questions asked of me — and also to thank those readers who have submitted contributions to *Starbase* or who have commented favourably on it.

Both *GDW* and *Games Workshop* are continuing to devote considerable resources to *Traveller*. Having seen *GDW*'s advance schedule of *Traveller* material, you are in for some interesting times over the next year or so. As for *Games Workshop*, with any luck the *IISS Ship Files (Vol. 1)* will be in the shops soon after you read this — I hope you have as much fun using the six vessels described therein as I did designing them. Several other *Traveller* projects are in the design and planning stages, which will be announced as they come to fruition. When you take into account the work of other publishers — *Judges Guild, Paranoia Press, Group One,* and so on, the position is healthy indeed.

Apart from the question of how to set up a *Traveller* adventure or campaign (which subject has been covered in *White Dwarf 19, Starbase*, and last issue by Andy Slack in *Backdrop of Stars*), one of the most frequent queries is on the best science fiction novels from a *Traveller* viewpoint. Below I have given a very short list of novels or short story collections, chosen not on literary merit but on interesting adventure situations, background detail or ingenious characters and places. I stress that it is a personal choice — other people will have other favourites; also some of them may be out of print or difficult to get (only a US printing, for example). In this case try one of the specialist science fiction bookshops that advertise in *White Dwarf*:

Robert Asprin (*The Bug Wars* — for bug-eyed monsters);
Ben Bova (*Colony* — for satellite colonies);
C. J. Cherryh (*Brothers of Earth, Hunter of Worlds, Serpent's Reach* — for possible Aslan background/situations);
Frank Herbert (*Dune Trilogy, The Dosadi Experiment, The Jesus Incident* — for good plots and background, though difficult to translate into adventures);
Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle (*The Mote in God's Eye* — one of the better 'man meets alien' stories);
Frederick Pohl (*Gateway* and *Jem* — good solid SF);
Jerry Pournelle (*Future History* — mercenary-type situations);
Brian Stapleford (*The Hooded Swan* series and the *Daedalus* series — for adventure situations).

Almost anything by:
Poul Anderson (especially the *Van Rijn/Polesotechnic League* stories and the *Flandry* series);
Gordon Dickson (*Dorsai Trilogy* and others);
Joe Haldeman (especially *The Forever War*);
Harry Harrison (*Deathworld Trilogy, Stainless Steel Rat* series and others);
Jack Vance (*Demon Princes* series, *Alastor* series and many others).

Finally to preserve a balanced viewpoint:
Douglas Adams (*The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy, The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*);
Most books by Ron Goulart.

Once beyond the idea-forming stage, another phase of the referee's job that I get many queries on is in producing a detailed scene — often blithely glossed over in supplements and articles with the words 'the referee should make a map of the area/plan of the buildings to a suitable level of detail'. My advice is to use every short-cut you can find. I am fortunate in that at work there is a technical library dealing mainly with architecture and engineering, but many of the periodicals should be available in public libraries. In the UK, the *Architect's Journal* (*AJ*) and *Architectural Review* (*AR*) usually contain several building plans of everything from housing to schools and offices. Searching through back issues might turn up just the building you are looking for. Atlases and more detailed maps (in the UK, the Ordnance Survey — I've had everyone from vikings to Imperial marines fight over the one-inch *Tourist Map of the Lake District*!) for area plans, of course.

Use lateral thinking — a lot of *D&D* and other games' play aids can be used for *Traveller*, if only for the plans. As an example, *The Halls of Tizun Thane* (see The *Best of White Dwarf, Scenarios*) could have all the monsters and stuff cleared out and used as the residence of a petty noble that the players may have been asked to burgle, assassinate or whatever. Indeed, many of the room descriptions may need little or no change. I have even drawn a plan of the office that I work in to use in a *Traveller* incident — as long as the players are unfamiliar with it, it doesn't matter what source you use — a tracing of a town centre map with the names of the roads changed becomes down town Mos Eisley or whatever; an Ordnance Survey map of the Scottish Highlands similarly treated becomes guerilla country on Efate/Regina — the possibilities are endless.

Lastly, I should like to remind readers that general correspondence on *Traveller* matters is always welcome, as well as contributions to *Starbase*. Only by making known your comments and opinions can we know how good or bad our treatment of *Traveller* is. And remember, we have a direct X-Boat link to Normal, Illinois — any relevant comments are passed on to *GDW* to let them know too. ■

TRAVELLER SCENARIO COMPETITION RESULT

This competition produced a fine crop of entries which were mostly of an impressively high standard. This made the judges' job rather difficult, but their final choice was:

1st: *Amber to Red* by Neil Cheyne;
2nd: *Weed War* by S. L. A. McIntyre;
3rd: *Pavabid* by Simon Earley.

Our congratulations to Neil Cheyne who will receive the prize of an autographed copy of *Leviathan*, kindly donated by *Games Workshop Ltd. Amber to Red* will be featured in the next issue.

What Makes A Good AD&D Character Class

by Lewis Pulsipher

A party of ninth and tenth level magic-users, clerics, and fighters hunts for a lich. Among them is an eighth level "Guardian" character, a class devised by the DM and used by the players. They come to a door. The guardian listens – he hears something. Then he looks through the door with his X-ray vision. Telling the others it's too dangerous for them in there, he turns ethereal and walks through the door. Five minutes later he opens it. "It's OK now. It was just 10 mind flayers, and when they attacked me psionically my mental boomerang defence scrambled their brains." The party shake their heads and look for spoils.

The guardian dominates this game, despite the powerful party. Whatever the requirements are for rolling a guardian, the class is too powerful. The other characters watch while the guardian deals with whatever arises. This is not good fantasy role-playing. New character classes add variety to *AD&D* and permit players to try things they would otherwise never attempt. But many of the classes published are unrestrained combinations of two or three classes, or wild interpretations of classes from novels or movies, which unbalance the game. My purpose is to explain what makes one character class a welcome addition, while another is a nightmare. First I'll give guidelines for developing a character class, and then pointers for classes derived from fiction.

The advantages of each class must be balanced by disadvantages. Players should play the class because it is different, not because it is more powerful than one of the basic *AD&D* classes. From ninth level upwards no character class should be as powerful as the magic-user class. *D&D* is a game of magic, and the magic-users are the strongest class at high levels.

It is easier to keep the number of advantages small than to devise many disadvantages. Remember, magic items neutralize disadvantages as the character lives his life. The least effective disadvantage of all is high ability requirements. No matter how high you set the requirements, some people are going to roll them. And for people who actually use the class, the ability requirements are no disadvantage at all. Ability requirements only reduce the numbers of a class, not their power. Our guardian example was too powerful if six 18s were required. A poor armour class is a favourite disadvantage given to many classes, such as the thief and magic-user. But it is often impossible to say why the character can't use better armour. You're better off choosing some other disadvantage. The third common disadvantage is high experience point requirements to rise in level. What counts is the character's power at a given experience point total, not his experience level. Experience levels are a convenient signpost; a third level "X" class is not necessarily equal to a third level "Y" class – compare experience points, not levels. The fourth disadvantage is to give the class "small" hit dice.

Don't combine the best aspects of two or more classes into a single new class. It will be difficult to devise disadvantages commensurate with the advantages of this combination. Multi-class characters already exist, with built-in disadvantages. But even if they did not, combo-characters are hard to control, and what's worse, they are likely to make the single-class characters envious.

Create a character class you could believe if you read about it in a good fantasy novel. The explanations for the existence of many classes are ridiculous. Jesters and idiots are two infamous examples which were published in *TSR's* own magazine several years ago – unfortunately not everyone treated them as jokes. It is best to base a new character either on fantasy traditions or on a class from a particular novel or fictional series.

The creation of the class will take a long time, with several drafts written at intervals of many months so that playing experience and comments can be obtained. Perhaps one or two out of four classes you devise will prove good enough to retain in the campaign. Begin by giving the class powers at the high or "name" levels, say tenth or eleventh, equal to those you see in the tradition or story on which you base the class. Find some evidence of how the character fared against creatures or dangers

already defined in *AD&D*. Say the character fought a bear – did he have much trouble? Even if the eleventh level Eldar or whatever killed the bear in two rounds in the story, a first level won't necessarily do as well! A first level character should not be more powerful than a first level ranger or paladin. So many designers give all the known powers to low levels and then devise even greater powers for higher levels that I must emphasize this point. Don't make the character more powerful at "name" level than he is in the source; and then don't make the higher levels *significantly* more powerful.

Don't be afraid to change the rules as you gain experience with the character. If another DM or player tells you that the class is too powerful, listen to his reasoning. Don't pay much attention to those who suggest increases to the character's abilities; the average player is biased, so his advice is likely to be intended, consciously or subconsciously, to increase the power of the class. By the same token, you should not play your class until you have finished it, to avoid bias. Use the class as a monster to playtest the higher levels.

When you model a class after a group or character from a particular story, there are several things to keep in mind. First, it is not necessary for the character to do everything the hero of the novel could do. Some abilities won't fit properly into the milieu, others will be too powerful to introduce to the group of abilities belonging to an existing class irrelevant. For example, a character who can move ethereally – which makes him invisible and silent – will make thieves useless.

Second, read your source carefully; don't rely on impressions that so-and-so could do something like X. Find the actual passage which says he could do X, and under what conditions.

Third, work from actual capabilities, not from relative strength. There are many people who think Gandalf must have been a 20th level wizard just because he was the most powerful spell-user in Middle-earth, excepting Sauron. But if you look at the spells he actually used in the stories, and remember that he wore one of the Three Rings, it is evident that he was no more capable than, say an eighth level *AD&D* cleric. This sounds weak, but in a world virtually devoid of magic such a character, with a magic *Ring of Fire,* is indeed incredibly powerful. Find analogous *D&D* spells or abilities for each ability of your model personality; don't rely on relative strengths or impressions of strength.

Fourth, remember that protagonists of epic fantasy are "born lucky". They roll 19s and 20s for saving throws, and stumble into good positions. Take this into account; luck should not be "built in". The character class should be *able* to reproduce the greatest feats of the model only when the character gets lucky, not as a standard action.

After you've created the first draft of your class, and after each successive draft, you should look at it in three ways. Compare it with tradition or with the story it is derived from, compare it with the strengths and weaknesses of existing classes, and then look at the effect of the class on the game – is it balanced, does it satisfy a need, is it fun?

I have discussed above the comparison of class to fiction. For the second comparison, is your class much stronger than other classes, particularly similar ones? For example, don't create a "weapon master" class which is significantly better than a fighter in almost every way at comparable experience point totals. In that case the players who have fighters will be envious, if not disgusted. If the character is as strong as a magic-user at high experience totals you should weaken it.

How does the character affect the game? A "jester" or "idiot" would only harm the campaign, making it a travesty of fantasy. An overpowerful character would dominate the adventure, as did our friend the guardian. A character who can do too many things will make the other players envious, listless; they may lose interest when they see how well another player can do merely by virtue of having had good die rolls. You'll almost certainly have to increase the experience point requirements for the character at some point, though this is not the panacea for every fault. Most of all, new classes should add variety to the game. If the game isn't more fun with the class, change it or forget it. ■

WHITE DWARF QUESTIONNAIRE

It is more than twelve months since we last conducted a questionnaire to establish whether or not *White Dwarf* continued to meet its readers' requirements. Now once again this is YOUR chance to influence the contents of the magazine. We want both criticism and comment, and the more people who respond, the more accurate the assessment will be. Either cut up this page, send a photocopy or write separately with your completed questionnaire to Questionnaire, *White Dwarf*, 1 Dalling Road, London W6 to arrive before 1st July 1981.

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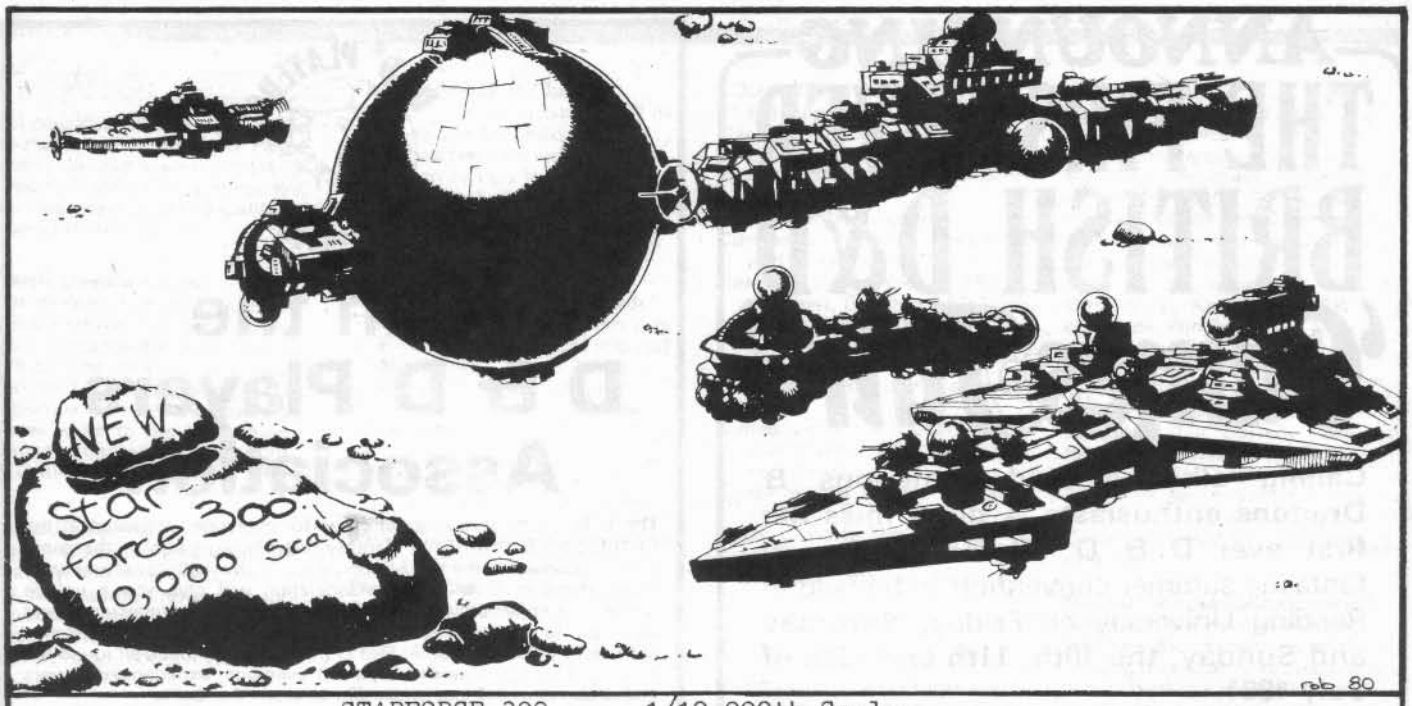

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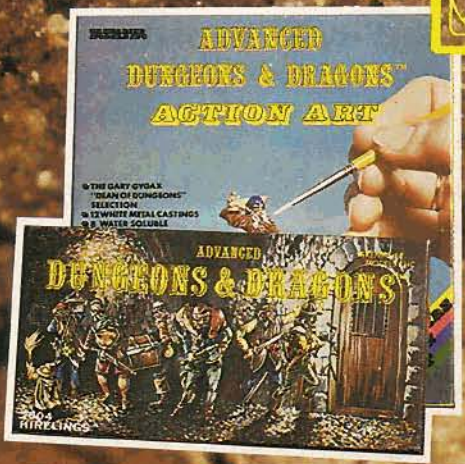

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All 3 packs are available from your local AD&D stockist. If in difficulty, write to us at TSR Hobbies (UK) Ltd., The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD. Tel: 0223 212517.

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Figures painted by Michael W Brunton

Photography by John Constable MMPA